

# **Sonorous Theatre - Dark Voices in Revolt: Uniting the core, proximity and the human voice in crisis**

by

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Vol. 1

## **DECLARATION**

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## **STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines the process of combining various non-conventional Occidental and Oriental voice and movement practices in order to create an alternate method of training and performance. Throughout this investigation, a series of original training methodologies have been developed which comprised of five distinct yet interconnected stages, and several performances that incorporated these training aesthetics. The training of voice and body as one entity is not a new concept, and many theatre practitioners have experimented with these elements.

The convergence of voice and body has been investigated for most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and has continued to develop throughout the past decade. Physiologically, the voice is housed within the body. It is therefore logical to initially focus on the physical aspect of vocal training, and to combine the separate voice and movement training in both logical and illogical senses in order to unify these two separate yet interconnected elements. This investigation does not claim to discover a new performance aesthetic, actor training method or a new physical and vocal training aesthetic. It aims to examine various combinations of existing Oriental and Occidental methods in order to discover an alternate to the multifaceted area of the human voice in performance pertaining to the notion of 'crisis'. The work explored throughout this investigation, using the Voice Theatre Lab as a means of exploration in training and performance, is the result of the application of various synergies, dichotomies and contradictions. These contradictions and abstract applications abandon literal and textual realities, and focuses on opposites and non-conventional means of vocal production and physical states. The result is a series of training and performance aesthetics that go beyond the quotidian forms of physical and vocal expression.

The title itself, *Sonorous Theatre - Dark Voices in Revolt: Uniting the core, proximity and the human voice in crisis*, represents these illogical and contradictory aspects. Sonority (deep and resonant), relates to the overall affect the performers extra-daily instrument has on the immediate (performance space and other performers) and surrounding (audiences and the peripheries of the performance space) spaces. In some Oriental viewpoints, 'dark' simply means 'inner' or 'deeper'. A 'dark' voice would therefore refer to a voice that has connections deep in the body. By eradicating logic and textual reality, the performer would have greater access to the deeper parts of the unconscious. This will result in a genuine sound free from idiosyncratic patterns that may hinder the reality of the vocal and physical expression, which would therefore hinder the reality of the performance. Overall, the concept of a 'dark' voice is a revolt against conventional Occidental vocal practices in the theatre.

Vocal expression and voice work provides the key for the performer to rediscover their mysterious entity – an inner voice of the unconscious through improvisations and non-verbal expressions. Voice Theatre Lab are not bound by the semantic meaning of words. The freedom from not having connections to meaning enables performers to explore a range of concrete and abstract elements. This investigation, and Voice Theatre Lab's ongoing work, aims to maintain the view that voice is indeed an immensely important tool which has been neglected. Also, physical and conceptual crisis, as opposed to freedom, relaxation and textual, 'literal reality', can benefit the voice and allow it to flourish and reveal its many colours and nuances.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 The problem statement

This investigation demonstrates a contrast to previous conventional Occidental voice practices. It challenges the notion of the body, voice and imagination relationship by examining the illogical, the contradictory and the atypical elements of physical and vocal actor training methods. There is no doubt that conventional, contemporary voice practitioners work on unifying body, voice and imagination. The London based Patsy Rodenburg, one of the worlds leading voice and acting coaches, stated that ‘Proper voice work is very physical’ (Rodenburg 1998, p.8). The American Arthur Lessac, who’s Lessac Kinesensic Training integrates voice, speech and movement, explained that ‘voice and speech must become intrinsically enmeshed with all the life energies – with the emotional and physical energies of the individual’ (Lessac 1967, p.xi). Scottish born, American based Kristin Linklater, who trained under the legendary voice teacher Iris Warren, mentioned that ‘the voice is generated by physical process’ (Linklater 1976, p.2). Joan Melton, author of *One Voice*, stated that ‘The voice is the body, in that (1) vocal production is a physical activity, and (2) physical position and movement directly affect the sound of the voice’ (Melton 2003, p.135). These statements clearly depict an organic melding of body, voice, imagination and thought. Dichotomy in terms of body and voice is very often neglected as a training tool in conventional Occidental voice practice, for example a free voice from a tense body, or a closed (I refrain from using the word ‘tight’ as it implies negative connotations and promotes unhealthy vocal practice) voice from a free body. This is not natural of course, and may seem contrived and inorganic.

As an actor training tool, dichotomies and contradictions may assist the performer in further exploring their physical and vocal potential by increasing stamina, developing control, and increasing overall concentration. This notion may also serve as an extension of the accepted voice and body practices. It would be advised that performers have an understanding of the crucial notion of unification of body, breath

and voice before they can embark on more experimental work like the practices explored in this investigation.

The following summary of the research title, *Sonorous Theatre – Dark Voices in Revolt: Uniting the core, the inner world and proximity to the human voice in crisis*, demonstrates the significant and fundamental balance of opposites: Oriental, Occidental; light, dark; contained, released; restriction, freedom, and most valid in terms of Butoh dance (which will be covered in Chapter 2.5): logical and illogical. The outcome of this method of combining concepts of Butoh, voice, the internal and the external, and the heightened, intense vocal production, can be classified as sonorous. The core of this investigation stems from the need to discover, unlock and express the ‘darker’ voice from the unconscious. ‘Dark’, in this example does not signify moroseness, morbidity, or in technical vocal terms, deep, guttural, or raspy; it denotes the internal. Tatsumi Hijikata, one of the founders of Butoh, stated that ‘Darkness is the best symbol for light. There is no way that one can understand the nature of light if one observes deeply the darkness’ (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.188).

Butoh has been titled the Dance of Darkness, thus the name “‘Ankoku Buyo’....which [Hijikata] chose in 1960 for his dance form’ (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.64). Can this contribute to the expression of a voice of darkness? If so, how do you can voice of darkness be achieved? Through this exploration of darkness, a revolt against the conventional Occidental and Oriental dance form originated.

The Butoh movement began in a spirit of revolt and to essentially ‘create performances which strove to break the rules, to upset existing forms and to shatter the traditional framework of dance’ (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.17). In addition to that, Natsu Nakajima stated that ‘Butoh should reject any notion of symbolism, message, or formalism, and only express its energy and freedom’ (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.132). This, in essence, is a revolt against all narrative and logical performance convention. Borrowing this notion of revolt, the investigation involved the Voice Theatre Lab. With its training and performance, the company aimed to revolt against conventional voice methods in order to discover an alternate means of

expression by fusing abstract imagery and illogical conventions. This investigation would take the overall principles of these statements by Masson-Sekine and Viala, and Nakajima and put it into a physical, vocal and textual context.

The Voice Theatre Lab, established at the Academy of the Arts, University of Tasmania in 2006, was implemented to develop these rigorous and highly energised physical and vocal training methods to create a physio-vocal training aesthetic. The aim of the Voice Theatre Lab is to explore these methods through core company training sessions and stage various productions that utilise these methods. The training methods and subsequent performance aesthetic can be described as an alternate to the already established methods. I have trained with various voice teachers such as Rowena Balos, Cicely Berry and Frankie Armstrong (to name a few), and also experienced non-Western voice and movement methods through Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre, Ozfrank Theatre Matrix and various other techniques experienced during my postgraduate studies at the National Institute of Dramatic Art. Throughout my professional practice and training, it was apparent that there are many contradictory methods and viewpoints about physical and vocal training for the actor. Some training methods used in physical aspects were ignored or discouraged in the vocal realm, and vice versa. The voice is housed within the body, therefore, there needs to be a degree of unification, not separation. What inspired me to initiate this project was the inherent need for not only a method of training which connected the body and the voice in a more intrinsic way, but to allow the performer to delve into an area which exercised their imaginations whilst attempting to perform challenging physical and vocal tasks.

The practice-led research project progressed through five cycles using members of the Voice Theatre Lab. Each of the five cycles included a combination of training, rehearsal and production outcomes which offered me an opportunity to test the hypotheses via action research, and that the findings of the action research was informed by personal observations, participant and peer feedback. It was necessary to break the project down into five cycles in order to explore and identify crucial elements within the investigation. The participants were actively involved in all the training and performances and were given appropriate Ethical Clearance from the

University of Tasmania's Human Research Ethics Committee in the very early stages of the research. Ethic approval was abandoned throughout the middle and latter stages of the research, as it was not deemed necessary and pertinent to the core nature of the investigation.

## **1.2 Structure of Thesis**

Chapter 2, *Background: Sonorous Theatre – The Human Voice in Crisis*, looks at contemporary views on voice and practitioners who combine Occidental and Oriental performance practice throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This discussion leads into the notion of the 'extra-daily' voice, a term initiated by Eugenio Barba, and how this term can be applied specifically to vocal practice. Chapter 2.4 looks at the notion of crisis in detail. The overall concept of crisis, an underpinning concept behind this investigation, will be explained prior to examining Conceptual Crisis, Vocal Crisis and Physical Crisis. Hijikata stated that 'through dance, we must depict the human posture in crisis' (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.82) and instead of seeking an aesthetic standard, the Butoh dancer 'attempts to bare [their] soul, to reveal the human being in his banality, ugliness and grotesqueness, to express the suffering and the joys of life' (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.17). This investigation, therefore, did not aspire to an aesthetic vocal ideal, instead, bearing the soul and to reveal the human voice in crisis in its banality, and to express the suffering and the joys of life through the voice. We physically express these joys and sorrows, but only in dire circumstances do we express them vocally. The next chapter examines these concepts by investigating and comparing them to related work, and related practitioners in the field.

In Chapter 3, the notion of Voice in Crisis will be cross-referenced with three practitioners central to the development of the practical and theoretical work undertaken in this investigation. It details the idea introduced in the previous chapter, and places it into context with relevant practitioners such as Alfred Wolfsohn and the Roy Hart Theatre, Eugenio Barba and Ozfrank Theatre Matrix, who's work is inspired by the Suzuki Actor Training Method. An outline of Roy Hart's preverbal treatment of voice and the unorthodox approach to voice training will be covered, looking at the

film *Theatre of Being* (1964) and the audio recording *Preverbal*, (a recording of *AND* (1972)). Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret's notion of Vocal Action, paralanguage and vocables influence on Voice Theatre Lab's training sessions will be examined, as well as comparisons of Voice Theatre Lab's *Dr Faustus* (2007, 2008) to Odin's *Ascent to the Sea* (1982) (a filmed version of their street theatre production *Anabasis*). Finally, the notion of Bodies in Crisis will be cross-referenced with Ozfrank Theatre Matrix's Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow (FSPK) treatment of the body in training. These theories and practices underpin Stage 1 to 5 of the Voice Theatre Lab training sessions.

Chapter 4 outlines the practical training session from Stage 1 through to 5. Chapter 4.1.1 through to Chapter 4.1.9 looks at the preliminary work undertaken which formed the basis of the training: the definition of the four theme areas of Butoh (Dead Body/Voice, Inner World, Imagery and Space Between). The successful theme area, Space Between, is examined in detail in Chapter 4.5, and further investigated by examining the effects energies (contained and released), paralanguage and vocables had on the theme. Chapter 4.3 through to 4.5 looks at voice production from the physical state of Crisis in the form of combining various core strength exercises with vocal freedom and flexibility (Linklater 1976). These evaluations and outcomes are cross-referenced with images, questionnaires, statements and data. The training sessions provided the performers the necessary tools for rehearsals and performance. The skills learnt during these training sessions were crucial in terms of allowing performers to prepare for performance.

Preliminary productions are outlined in Chapter 5. With each preliminary production, the methods from techniques and practice developed during rehearsal stages obtained from actor feedback, directors log and performance and rehearsal journal are discussed. Furthermore, the transference of training methods into performance will be investigated, and the results will be discussed. The implementation of imagery and Butoh will be discussed in reference to *White Dark* (2007) and *Dr Faustus* (2007, 2008), where the imagery was dissected into internal and external. The final preliminary production, 5 (2008), explored the notion of paralanguage, non-textual

narrative and vocables. These three productions were crucial in developing the major production, *Iam Nocte* (2010).

Chapter 6 outlines the major production, an adaptation of Seneca's *Oedipus*, titled *Iam Nocte*. This production was an original adaptation, referencing the original Latin text (thelatinlibrary.com 2008), translations by Frank Justus Miller (1917) and Edward Fairchild Watling (1966) while referring to Ted Hughes adaptation (1969). The methods and techniques developed from the previous three productions assisted in developing the work in progress *The Oedipus Project* (2009), which led to *Iam Nocte* (2010). The transference of Physical, Vocal and Conceptual Crisis will be also explored and Chapter 6.2, which sees the refinement of the method by examining the re-staging the final production. The discussion of the total outcomes of the performances as a collective and how they all combine and relate to create a performance style, which encompasses the notion of Crisis, will form the conclusion of the chapter.

Chapter 7 discusses some practices explored as part of the study that are worthy of further investigation. One of the major questions when the project has been completed is: does this project suggest any interesting further avenues? Are there any ways in which theatre workers can improve and the research and practice discussed in this investigation? When the hypothesis is solid, and questions answered and discoveries both personal and artistic in relation to vocal production in various states of Crisis have been made, is there room for further explorations? Evolution and continual development of artistic work is crucial in terms of progressing the art form, and to evolve and develop as artists, trainers and creators, a respect for change and further advancement is necessary.

In Chapter 8, a summary of worthy goals will be outlined as well as the summation and definition of the training and performance style. The contribution of the investigation will also be restated. The overall hypothesis will be explored in relation to the practical and theoretical work undertaken. An overview and summation of the entire training sessions and performances will be detailed, and discussions relating to the psychological effects on the performers in relation to the work will be discussed.

This notion leads on to the discussion of vocal issues and concerns that may also stem from the training, rehearsal and performance practice. When this is covered, a summation of contributions relating to the overall project will be explored and in conclusion, a comparison of the work to other related and similar practitioners will be examined.

### **1.3 Contributions**

The proposed training method and performance style will not be a representation of a mixture of Oriental and Occidental performance concepts and techniques. Doing this would see a mere generalisation, mimicry and perhaps mockery of styles steeped in tradition, and cultural and historical significance. Eugenio Barba ‘rejected the idea of Occidental actors merely reproducing Oriental forms’ (Watson 1995, p.133) and if Occidentals attempt to replicate these styles, it would result in ‘poor imitations of the original’ (Watson 1995, p.144). Barba continued to argue that No theatre or Kathakali involved a lifetime of study and practice, therefore it would destroy the dignity of these forms of performance to merely reproduce them on a contemporary Occidental stage. Having stated that, this investigation contributes the notion of merging Occidental and Oriental, not to create a cross-cultural hybrid performance style, but to unlock the psychological imaginative realm and physio-vocal potential of the performer.

### **1.4 Conclusion**

Performers can be vocally tentative which can inhibit them to explore the full capabilities of their voices. Perhaps they regard it as being a fragile instrument closely connected to their own psyche. Why is it that the body can be stretched and pushed to the limits in physical theatre, but the voice is regarded as a sacred, delicate instrument? Why do some performers have the notion that the body and the voice are separate and why is the body and voice frequently trained separately? Actors need to move and speak at the same time, and sometimes they need to move *vigorously* and speak at the same time. These exercises developed in this investigation challenge that notion of complacency within physical and vocal training. Along with the training, a

performance method was also developed to further challenge the notion of the voices role in exploratory theatre.



## CHAPTER 2

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### BACKGROUND: SONOROUS THEATRE AND THE HUMAN VOICE IN CRISIS

#### 2.1 Views on voice

The human voice has been a topic of investigation for centuries, from rhetoric in ancient Greece to the therapeutic voice work of Arthur Lessac (1967) and Paul Newham (1998). Although this field has been widely studied, the human voice is still an object of mystery. Jacqueline Martin, author of *Voice in the Modern Theatre* stated that vocal delivery is a 'much-neglected area of performance practice' (Martin 1991, p. xiii) even though there have been many publications throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century on voice and speech in the theatre.

Voice in the theatre, although a highly significant instrument, has been a neglected concept overall until recent times, and much more emphasis is placed on physical and visual aspects of theatre. We are increasingly living in a visual society where symbols, visual aesthetics and body language seem more significant than verbal or vocal communication. This visual precedence has placed less emphasis on the use and practice of the human voice in general and the result is the overall disassociation from the power, substance and weight of the voice when it comes to not only everyday communication, but also the demanding arena of live performance. Kalo, Midderigh and Whiteside stated that 'man has for many centuries failed to appreciate his voice; he has underestimated it and neglected it and allowed it to waister away; he has virtually strangled it, chained it up and confined it to a straitjacket' (Kalo, Midderigh & Whiteside 1997, p. 185).

The human voice is an object of expression that we all possess, and the following section will depict the reasons how the human voice has been restricted, and why. Roy Hart, voice teacher, therapist and director said '*what* is this voice of man, *why* is this voice of man, *who* is this voice of man...The true voice of man, in fact, is a

mystery' (...And Man Had A Voice 1964). This mystery Hart speaks of will be explored in this investigation.

The human voice is necessary for daily communication, and yet 'speaking is one of man's most complex skills' (Levelt 1993, p.2). We highly underestimate the power of language and the role that the human voice plays in our everyday communication. It is therefore hardly an instrument of mystery if we utilise this tool every day of our lives. The voice also reveals our inner most feelings, hence the exhortation from expressing our thoughts through sound and paralanguage. It is this exact mystery that we want to keep private, as this private space reveals our inner most desires, thoughts and feelings. The voice is the most intimate of our selves; it is rooted in the depths of our primitive self, yet it has the ability to express our most intellectual, conscious thoughts. As Hart stated: 'Surely then such an instrument possessed by all of us is worth a little study?' (...And Man Had A Voice 1964). By looking at statements made by Hart, Levelt and Kalo, Midderigh and Whiteside, we have seen that the human voice is contradictory in nature. It is suppressed, mysterious and esoteric, yet on the other hand, it is a tool of communication that we use daily without any thought. It is also an instrument that is highly under-utilised and neglected in daily life and performance.

There are various theories why the voice is a neglected area. Hart claims that 'in our adulthood [we] sacrifice this boundless dream-kingdom [which is the ultimate vocal potential] for the dubious game of 'literal reality' (...And Man Had A Voice 1964). The literal reality is the logical, intellectual, and therefore habitual use of the voice, as opposed to the natural voice, which is 'what we came into the world at birth' (Rodenburg 1992, p.19). Hart claimed that our 'every-day' voices are 'cramped...[and] lifeless' [and is] man's attempt to be objective, non emotional' (Hart 1964). Hart continued, stating that 'emotion is interpreted as sloppy sentimentality and not what it is in fact the dynamic live urge for truthful expression which include the whole body...mind and soul' (...And Man Had A Voice 1964). Why is it so that the adult has lost his or her freedom of expression that they possessed as a baby? According to Rodenburg and Hart, it is unanimous that consciousness and literal reality has blocked the vocal potential.

As a result of this superiority and primacy of literal reality, performers have lost the instinct of connecting voice to body, and voice to the inner self. The ability to commit fully to the primeval, primordial sounds that we expressed at birth has vanished. These literal realities have repressed our vocal potential and inhibited us to explore, develop and control our extra-daily voices. This is why for centuries, the human voice, shrouded in mystery, has been the centre for many debates. It is a voice in Crisis, and it is this Crisis that this investigation aims to explore. The human voice, and its many facets, nuances and dynamics will be taken to the forefront of the modern stage during the course of this analysis; a human voice which has been buried under layers of intellect, ignorance and cautiousness; a human voice which ultimately illustrates the inner mechanism of the performers psyche. In order to achieve this, the performer needs to locate and train this interiority, an interiority that some Occidental directors and voice practitioners fail to recognise as an important means of unearthing the human voice in crisis. By merging East and West, a deeper, profound method of vocal training and practice will emerge. Some major figures in 20<sup>th</sup> Century theatre have already explored this notion.

The debates regarding the neglect of voice in the context of this research is necessarily and profoundly simplified. The reasons why more debates or thorough probing of vocal neglect is not outlined in this investigation stem from the fact that there is an obvious word limit, which restricts the expansion and embellishment on periphery topics. There is not the scope to do justice the detail of the variety of practices cited in a research paper with word limitations.

## **2.2 East and West**

One prominent Occidental theatre practitioner to explore Oriental performance practice was Jerzy Grotowski who combined methodologies and practice inspired from his journeys in India and China. Several decades before him, Antonin Artaud found inspiration in the Balinese theatre he first encountered in 1931, and more recently, Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine. The fact that these practitioners were exploring Oriental performance is important because it addressed the need for

exploring symbolism, oppositional tension, ritual, and above all, a search for alternate methods of performance practice as opposed to the Stanislavski method which is 'based on an understanding of the way we behave in our daily lives, which [is then used] when creating a character' (Benedetti 1998, p.2). Tatsumi Hijikata, one of the founders of Butoh, stated that in the 'Stanislavski system...man finds himself in a narrow and constricted world' (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988 p.185) a world that Roy Hart called 'literal reality' (...And man had a voice 1964), which in his opinion, restricted the human voice. Grotowski's one-time associate, Eugenio Barba, explored, and continues to investigate the relevance of Oriental performance practice.

Barba, one of Europe's leading theatre directors who became an unofficial member of Grotowski's Laboratory in the early 1960's, found Grotowski's knowledge of the East fascinating. According to Richard Schechner, 'no Occidental theatre thinker and worker...has investigated Asian theatre techniques, theories and practice as systematically as has Eugenio Barba' (Watson 1993, p.ix). For this reason, Barba will be one of the significant Occidental figures that will be examined in relation to the merging of East and West. Barba, like Grotowski, was interested in the art of performer training, and through his research developed a theory of extra-daily technique. Extra-daily (which is the definition of his theory of 'pre-expressivity') bodies are, as Schechner (1993) quoted in Watson (1993), 'special non-ordinary performing bodies' (Watson 1993, p.xi). This is achieved by training certain body tensions and oppositions, vocalising in certain ways, moving and gesturing. Extra-daily techniques 'do not respect the habitual conditioning of the use of the body' (Barba 1995, pp.15 - 16), however, although Barba focused on the physical aspect of extra-daily techniques, the mention of voice as a fundamental focus is not visibly evident. In spite of this, Barba claimed in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (1991) that the 'path of inculturation...leads to rich variations and shades of daily behaviour, to an essential quality of the vocal action of language' (Barba 1991, p.190).

The terms Oriental and Occidental are useful and appropriate in framing the project, and it is important to note that these terms are liberally used in the context of this investigation. The cultural contexts of these methods must be referred to as Oriental

and Occidental to identify their place in a broader cultural context. It only relates to the inherent origins of the first hand training and performance aesthetics of the methods investigated, such as Butoh and Suzuki, and the adapted variants and Western influences presented through Barba and Grotowski. Barba's *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (1991) clearly outlines various non-Western methods of theatre practice while Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968) lucidly discusses his Eastern influences. Although the performance and training aesthetic of this investigation cannot obviously be categorised into either Oriental or Occidental as cultural hybridity is and has been present in the performing arts for many years, they have a strong cultural foundation which can be traced.

### **2.3 The extra-daily voice**

An extra-daily voice can occur through dichotomies and Crisis paralleling abstract techniques of Orientals and Occidental performance methods, which juxtapose Stanislavski's method of truthfully depicting daily activities. Barba asserts that there is a basic system that is in common to all performers, and defines this as 'pre-expressive', which means how to render the actors energy scenically alive, so the actor can become a presence that immediately attracts the spectator (Barba 1991, pp.187-188). The aim is not to recreate or examine specific Asian performance styles. It examines the devices, principles and theories that constitute a 'pre-expressivity' level concerned with the notion of crisis in order to reveal the covert voice in performance. In an attempt to grasp what it means to find an extra-daily voice, this investigation examined specific dichotomies and collectiveness of voice and body, explored the deconstruction and abandonment of text and textual meaning, and justified the relevance of merging Occidental and Oriental philosophies and practice in order to achieve this extra-daily voice and to reveal the unconscious.

The extra-daily, in terms of this investigation, was the result of the application of various dichotomies and contradictions, which abandoned the 'literal reality' Roy Hart addressed, therefore focused on opposites and non-conventional means of vocal production and physical states. In the performative, textual sense, the concept of dichotomy lied in the dividing of logic (which is the text in a given script and the

characters intention and motivation) and the illogical (the abstract imagery derived from the text that affects physio-vocal production). In a more physical sense, dichotomy is the division of voice and body; for example, a free and expressive voice while the body is in a state of Crisis: unconventional states of balance and physical tensions that display an extra-daily physicality. In an expressive sense, the emotions are split so that the performer wears a mask, using only their facial muscles, of happiness, whilst vocalising the sound of sadness. This jolts the perception of the spectator, leading them to an unexplored realm that is neither expressing the emotions in question. These dichotomised treatments are a method of exploring the notion of Crisis.

## **2.4 Crisis**

Throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, various artistic movements have surfaced as a decided revolt against the conventional forms of performance. This artistic movement that had no form and no structure reared itself in 1915 when Hugo Ball searched for the ‘meaning which he could set up against the absurd and meaningless’ (Richter 1978, p. 13) age in which he lived. A revolt in the context of this investigation is the uprising against conventional vocal practices, for example, moving away from the notion of the ‘tentative, safe voice’ and exploring the ‘dark’ facets of it, not dissimilar to Arthur Janov’s Primal Scream (Janov 1973), where patients’ scream would allow them to unlock the secrets of their neurosis, and Paul Newham’s voice and movement therapy. This is an attempt to discover another way to unravel the mystery of the human voice by applying states of Crisis.

Crisis can be described as an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person’s life, it is also an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty. Athletes undergo rigorous training programs to increase their personal best and improve on their general performance (S Stone 2009, pers. comm., 6 May). Like the experience gained by actors engaged in the Suzuki Actor Training Method (SATM), of the Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow (FSPK), each athlete’s threshold is different, and they know their limits. They improve their overall performance when they break through their threshold. We have now seen that Crisis is a vital essence for

achieving desired results, and that an athlete's physical and mental preparation is comparable to a performer's. It is important now to examine how Crisis is used in a performance context focusing on Tatsumi Hijikata, SATM and FSPK, and how Barba interpreted the notion of crisis.

Although the Japanese Butoh dance method was a deliberate form of revolt against Occidental dance practice, its co-founder, Tatsumi Hijikata, was deeply influenced by the West, particularly surrealist literature, poetry and classical ballet. This influence, together with the inspiration from Artaud and Neue Tanz, coupled with the post World War II Occidentalisation of Japan resulted in the creation of Butoh. It was through his dances *Kinjiki* (1959) and *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968) that Hijikata explored 'trauma...through the body' (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2004, p.74) and introduced this primal, cathartic movement to the world. Hijikata created *Revolt of the Flesh* as a result of the decades of imprisonment by the West, and involved uncontrollable savagery and mockery of Occidental conventions, utilised barbaric images; the climax saw the killing of a live rooster. Hijikata's performance and training techniques were rigorous and physically demanding as the 'dancer presents a low level of unity that brings the dancer closer to the body through the realization of death and the struggle of uprightness' (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2004, p.52). Butoh is essentially a silent art form, then what would happen if the performer vocalised in these extreme physical states of Crisis?

Japanese theatre director Tadashi Suzuki is one example of a practitioner who trains the voice while his performers are in physical states of Crisis. According to Professor Paul Allain from the University of Kent, 'through repeated engagement with crisis and difficulty in training, the performer can learn to control the tension of struggle to help put the audience at ease, while simultaneously keeping their energy level amplified' (Allain 2002, p.123). Suzuki's training sees the performer physically calm, but internally energized. The training, which drives the participant to surpass their limits, forces them to 'transgress quotidian boundaries' (Allain 2002, p.124), thus depicting the extra-daily. Barba stated that the performer should embrace tiredness and 'to work through the lethargy can often lead to remarkable results and discoveries about [their] ability' (Turner 2004, p.111). The performer must therefore 'push

through tiredness because sometimes [they] feel tired merely because [they] have stopped concentrating' (Turner 2004, p.111).

Core strength engagement, most evident in Suzuki's *Sitting Statues* and Hijikata's early dances, allows the performer to concentrate on many elements including balance and breathing. When in difficult positions, core strength muscles are engaged and a higher level of concentration is needed. If the voice is included to the concept and body in *Crisis*, the voice is pressured to transcend beyond the physical discomfort and will find its sonority. Suzuki, in a statement made to Eelke Lampe in rehearsals, stated that performers must 'create the area where [they] are not free then [the need to be] free there becomes stronger' (Lampe 1993, p.155). For this reason, vocal production will be investigated as a primary source of expression through the body in *Crisis*. Three states of crisis will be examined: Conceptual, Vocal and Physical Crisis, and they will be linked to the subsequent practices of Eugenio Barba, Tadashi Suzuki and Butoh.

### **2.4.1 Conceptual Crisis**

Butoh has influenced Occidental theatre practitioners such as Robert Wilson, Peter Brook and Martha Graham at one point in their careers. In the article *Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty and Mad* (1986), Bonnie Sue Stein classified Butoh as being 'shocking, provocative, physical, spiritual, erotic, grotesque, violent, cosmic, nihilistic, cathartic, [and] mysterious' (Stein 1986, p.5). Perhaps this is why the West is so interested; it is exciting, ambiguous and metamorphic. Butoh is a dangerous, exotic and mystifying art form that tampers with forbidden themes; themes that seem dangerous even for the contemporary Occidental stage. It is evident that some prominent contemporary Occidental theatre practitioners were influenced by it and used it in an attempt to shock, entertain and find new ways of interpreting Occidental theatre. Butoh may have been utilised as a stylistic means, but how do these physical applications affect the voice?

Butoh has developed greatly throughout the last century and each Butoh artist interprets the dance differently. Butoh, although contemporary in concept and style



and a deliberate revolt against any tradition, is steeped in Japanese history as it is closely linked to Kabuki and Noh theatres. These links are insincere and somewhat contemptuous, such as the coarse application of white face and body paint reminiscent of the make-up used in Kabuki, and sometimes slow movements as in the minimalist works of Min Tanaka, which has roots in Noh theatre. In Japan, Butoh is still regarded as an underground movement and is much more accepted in the West.

Some practitioners argue that Butoh and voice do not merge. To some, Butoh is primarily a silent art form and the beauty or ugliness permeates only through the dancers body. Kazuo Ohno, one of the founders of Butoh stated at one point that he danced with his mouth open, as in a silent scream reminiscent in Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, because the soul is released from the mouth. Surely, a sound from the open mouth would expose the inner most depths of the dancers world, a sound that is truly connected to the extreme physicality in the state of Crisis. By adapting selected philosophies and practices of Butoh with voice work will the performer be anchored to their deeper impulses and make contact with their inner world? Will this method achieve the notion of voicing the unvoiced through illogical and abstract sounds such as paralanguage and vocables? After all, Kazuo Ohno claimed that the illogical is liberating, and it is this illogical element, this abstraction that exposes the dark side of the human soul.

The notion of revolt against the convention, the concept of revealing the inner world, the idea of depicting the 'universal', the idea of 'killing off the body' in order to represent, as Hijikata said, the 'corpse standing upright' and the depiction of the internal and external imagery all contribute to the overall conceptual crisis. This will be the foundation from which the voice, text, and various physical applications will be supplemented. In the next section, the notion of vocal crisis will be investigated and it will outline the alternative methods of the use of the human voice in modern theatre.

### **2.4.2 Vocal Crisis**

Conventional Occidental vocal practices may be far from the concept of Crisis as on the whole, they focus on the freeing of the voice, the overall relaxation of the body in

which the voice is housed. Relaxation is crucial for successful performances; however, the stage should represent a reality that is far beyond the safe, and often banal sanctuary sometimes found in conventional theatre. The voice in this investigation expressed the opposite: inner world of the performer as a result of a Physical Crisis they encountered through extra-daily training and performance practice which included non-verbal theatre.

Non-verbal theatre surfaced during the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Prominent figures such as Bertolt Brecht and Grotowski have all explored the non-verbal aspects of performance, especially Antonin Artaud, who almost disregarded language all together. One theory developed by P. N Campbell, author of *The Role of Language in the Theatre* (1982), is that theatre people long for the non-verbal, and have a desire to move away from literary theatre where the superiority of language and the spoken word dominate. The concept of vocal experimentation is not revolutionary, and the following paragraphs will introduce several prominent practitioners who have explored these concepts.

Several theatre directors throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have placed vocal abstraction to the forefront of their training and productions. The eponymous Roy Hart Theatre explored the archetypal voice during the 1960's and 1970's, developing the notion of an eight octave range and the abolition of the concept of the male/female voice through productions like *AND* (1972) and *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (1969). The American Richard Schechner had a great influence on non-verbal aspects of voice in contemporary theatre. He founded the Performance Group in New York and was a 'proclaimed disciple of Grotowski and Artaud' (Martin 1991, p.128). In the 1960's, Schechner explored the connections between animal and human behaviour in primitive cultures and ritual drama. Robert Wilson also digressed from linear narrative to develop his own non-verbal form of communication in his productions. Wilson developed his own audio score that he collected in a visual book. His first performance piece he directed in 1963 saw the audience extremely confused, as it did not have a linear structure as he was trying to capture performance in its simplest form through symbols. Eugenio Barba also explored paralanguage, vocables and made-up languages in his productions with the Odin Teatret.

It was Barba's work that influenced three main areas of the vocal component of this investigation. Firstly, Vocal Actions he developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Barba, who considered the voice as an invisible extension of the body, extended the resonator work he encountered at Grotowski's Laboratory, by focusing on vocal placement. This was practiced by 'reaching to a particular point in the room with the voice...filling the entire space with it, or using the voice to "touch" a fellow performer' (Watson 1993, p.67). Secondly, Barba's concept of vocables, paralanguage and nonsensical, made-up languages was explored by integrating it with the body in a state of Crisis. Odin's production *Ornitofilene* 'focused more on the musicality of vocal sound than on the semantic aspect of language' (Watson 1993, p.74), rejecting linguistic meaning by using invented languages (Watson 1993, p.65). These elements from Scechner to Barba can be seen as Vocal Crisis as the conventional structure, use and semantics of voice is extended, amplified, enlarged beyond recognition to depict the primordial, preverbal, and representational significance of the inner world expressed through sound.

Barba's vocal actions were integrated with Butoh's concept of imagery in order to develop a deeper physio-vocal connection. The vocal abstraction of paralanguage and vocables parallels the physical abstraction and surrealism of Butoh dance practice, and the results, which occurred from the merging of the two, was investigated. If the voice is connected to the conceptual notion of Crisis (which is the notion of ambiguity and representing the true essence of the image or emotion derived from Butoh), we would not hear intellectually contrived dialogue, we would hear the cries, shouts, screams and full bodied emotional expressions from an internal source. These vocalisations are essentially the essence of these emotions, as they are exaggerated beyond the point of recognition.

### **2.4.3 Physical Crisis**

This concept of physical crisis was explored with the assistance and guidance of John Nobbs and Jacqui Carroll, directors of Ozfrank Theatre Matrix. Nobbs performed in Suzuki's *The Chronicle of Macbeth*, Playbox Theatre, Melbourne, in 1992, and was

the only Australian who was invited to be a member of an international panel to codify Tadashi Suzuki's practice. He was consulted to be a part of this investigation for that reason. Suzuki has been a unique force in Japanese and Occidental theatre for over four decades. An integral component of his work has been the development and teaching of his rigorous and physically demanding training system. 'Suzuki training is akin to martial arts' (Allain 2002, p.124), requires an enormous amount of discipline, and through engagement with Crisis and demanding training 'the performer can learn to control the tension of struggle...while simultaneously keeping their energy level amplified' (Allain 2002, p.123). On the other hand, Patsy Rodenburg claimed that 'tension can...prevent [the performer] from getting through a performance' (Rodenburg 1997, p.10).

How then is it so that Suzuki produces focused and physically dynamic performers who obtain no vocal strain when speaking in performance? Allain, I believe, is referring to 'positive tension', whilst Rodenburg indicates 'negative tension' – tension that inhibits the breath and creative flow of the performer. There is confusion between the importance of tension and the necessity of freedom. The performer may find complete liberty through extreme focus due to the strict demands and discipline of the training, which demands both physical and mental endurance.

As Suzuki's controversial training method is rigorous and plagued with Physical Crisis, there may be a risk that these physical tensions may 'exacerbate vocal stress' (Allain 2002, p.127). Paul Allain Senior Lecturer in Drama at the University of Kent, stated that:

Occidental modes of vocal training prioritise relaxation and release as well as extensive warming up. By contrast, Suzuki's way demands expression in moments of tension by making the diaphragm a tensed muscle that forcefully and energetically expels air (Allain 2002, p.127).

Overall, this contradiction and dichotomy is the essence of the enquiry, and is a factor that is in need of investigation: the dichotomy of the human instruments.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have examined the importance of vocal research in contemporary theatre and discussed the fact that it is still an object of mystery despite the abundance of research that has taken place. In order to achieve a deeper connection with the body and voice, Oriental and Occidental practices would merge to expose extra-daily behaviours on stage. Although many Occidental theatre practitioners have dealt with the merging of East and West, this investigation plans to combine elements which focus on the illogicality of vocal and physical practice to probe deeper and to unleash the human voice in Crisis. This chapter also introduced methods from prominent practitioner that this investigation would draw upon to further develop the notion of Crisis, and examine the resultant voice production. Furthermore, the dichotomy of voice and movement was explored in relation to tension and relaxation in order to develop a thorough training and performance method that safely and effectively demonstrates the need and controlling of tensions. This in turn prepares the performer to undertake physically and vocally demanding tasks.

The outcome of this investigation comprised of a training method, with exercises and explanations that practically demonstrated how the performer could merge these concepts that extend the imaginative, physical and vocal capabilities with an underpinning notion of Crisis. In addition to the training sessions, three small-scale productions were mounted to trial the theories throughout the process, and a major production staged towards the completion that included successful elements. The merging of the three concepts of crisis would aim to reclaim the 'lifeless voices' (...And Man Had A Voice 1964) that Roy Hart referred to and through deconstruction and abandoning logic, discover and express the extra-daily voice. The philosophies and methods of Butoh dance, employed for the purposes of implementing conceptual crisis, contributed the notion of freedom, catharsis and abstract imagery; its psychology, its physical form and philosophical foundation and how this could be implemented with voice was investigated. In addition, Vocal Crisis was integrated using adaptations of Barba's Vocal Action, pre-expressive and extra-daily techniques, usage of vocables, paralinguage and made up languages. The FSPK, which grew from

the SATM (in particular the rigid discipline, stillness, physical rigour and energy, with its dichotomies and imperative contradictions), formed the foundations of Physical Crisis. These three forms of Crisis are far more complex and dissimilar to Occidental forms of heightened energy on stage. These non-Occidental influences would create a cross-cultural, sonorous form of performance that would reveal the voice from the inner world of the performer; it would reveal a dark voice, which through revolt will illustrate the human voice is Crisis.

Although not intrinsic to the project itself, it is possible that the practice may induce therapeutic tendencies due to the raw, primeval aspects of the physical and vocal work. Although therapeutic aspects were not encouraged or promoted, some links may have been evident, and perhaps this would need further investigation by professionals in the field. Paul Newham, a therapist who uses voice and movement as a therapeutic tool, declares that preverbal, primordial sounds allows the patient to recover and unearth that very organic essence which has been suppressed. Newham, maintained that:

During the...[therapeutic voice-work undertaken] the client often appears to vivify and reanimate an earlier time in our history and evolution as sounds emerge which seem of mythical proportion: piercing screeched, bellowing sobs, spirited cries, beauteous and angelic melodies of glee as well as crude implorings of despair (Newham 1998, p. 143-144).

Like Roy Hart, Newham believes that voice work provides the key for the patient to rediscover his or her mysterious entity, an inner voice through improvisations and non-verbal expressions, an inner voice that has been profoundly effected by past circumstances, personal trauma and literal reality. This profound area is in need of study and since then, a tremendous amount of research on the voice has been made.

## **CHAPTER 3**

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### **RELATED WORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, we will examine techniques from relevant non-Butoh theatre practitioners that relate to this investigation whose treatment of voice in the theatre is regarded as non-conventional and radical. The theatrical, theoretical and vocal practices of Alfred Wolfsohn, Roy Hart, Eugenio Barba and the Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow (FSPK) will be covered as some of the techniques utilised by these practitioners inspired and influenced the training and rehearsal process. Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre and the Saratoga International Theatre Institute (SITI) will also be mentioned as prominent figures in merging Oriental aesthetics with Occidental contexts. Wolfson, Hart and Barba's treatment of voice in theatre will be compared to the training and performance of the Voice Theatre Lab. This will be paralleled with FSPK's physical applications, which is represents a form of Physical Crisis. Wolfson was one of the first Occidental practitioners to investigate and recognise the value of unacceptable sound (Pikes 2000, p.185), which its influences are evident in the Roy Hart Theatre to this day. Barba's 'rejection of linguistic logic' (Watson 1993, p.65) is an indication of an extra-daily concept by which the performer transcends beyond the conventional means of theatrical communication. Tadashi Suzuki's (through the work of Ozfrank Theatre Matrix's FSPK) notion of energy and Centre is profound, and his concepts form the physical basis of the practical component of the investigation.

#### **3.2 Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart Theatre**

Alfred Wolfsohn believed that the human soul materialised through the voice and healing took place through the exploration of its full range. Wolfsohn was not advocating a primitive form of Arthur Janov's Primal Scream, where the patient is eradicated of their psychological pains by releasing vocal screams, it promoted subconscious expressivity through the extended range that Roy Hart further developed

in his eponymous theatre company. The beginnings of this revolutionary concept of vocal use originated during World War 1; the cries of pain expressed from his injured and dying comrades were the cause of his physical and mental breakdown. The war had scarred Wolfsohn for life, and decided he wanted to become a singer in order to find his voice and soul, which he had lost as a result of the guilt suffered from abandoning his comrades. That journey would find him searching for the ‘human being behind the human voice’ (roy-hart.com/sheila.htm 2008), as during those pivotal moments in the trenches of 1917 never before had Wolfsohn heard such a raw, emotionally charged and sonorous sound that influenced the way we look at the human voice today. He subsequently researched the potential of the voice through its ability for revealing the inner being of an individual’s personality through vocal expression (Martin 1991, p.64). Wolfsohn’s successor, Roy Hart, expanded the work and developed the eight-octave ideal whereby the whole man could be explored (Martin 1991, p.65). One member of the Roy Hart Theatre, in a documentary about the group explained that the extreme use of pitch was developed to ‘connect...all the various centres of energy in [their] body’ (Theatre of Being 1964).

### **3.3 Theatre of Being and the Voice Theatre Lab**

*Theatre of Being* (1964) was a demonstration of the vocal research of the Roy Hart Theatre that contained interviews with members, excerpts from performances and group rehearsal exercises. An exercise called Amoeba, which was first introduced by Wolfsohn, was demonstrated at the beginning of the film. The group stood in various poses and Hart played several high pitch notes on a piano at various intervals. The members moved on impulse as a result of the sound, releasing on high pitch squeals as they huddled together in a tight group while gesturing. The group then froze and waited for the impulse instigated by the piano. Hart would call out various instructions, for example ‘shock’, and then the participants would disperse from the tight group and follow Hart’s directions accordingly. In this case, it seemed as though ‘shock’ was interpreted as the expression of the emotion through the voice in an extreme outward burst of energy that lasted for a second followed by silence, with a sustained physical pose (arms stretched towards the sky). Hart would frequently call out directions and immediately play a chord or several notes on the piano; the



participants would continuously change the poses while vocalising on an extremely high pitch sound. It was evident that the participants obtained a high level of contained energy; they were not outwardly expressing emotion, rather, the emotion or thought was internally generated.

This containment of energy present in the Amoeba exercise, and its aesthetic quality were similar to two exercises: Anticipation, Action and Reaction (Appendix 1.1, p.1) and Eggs (5 2008) (1min. 27sec.) developed by the Voice Theatre Lab during Stage 3 and 4 of the Training Sessions, which were subsequently showcased in the production 5 (2008). In Eggs, participants began in a sitting position, head down, with their knees held to their chest. A drumbeat was played and the participants slowly rose as if they were 'reborn'. They discovered their bodies and their voices as they moved to the beat of the drum. In the exercise Moments of Breath, Voice and Emotion, participants stood in a circle and when a beat was struck (in the case of 5, a consistent beat played on a cymbal), participants 'shuffled' in time to a spot around the circle, stopped simultaneously, and expressed a certain emotion. A more detailed deconstruction of these exercises is demonstrated in the next chapter. These two exercises were influenced by non-Occidental elements found in the abstract, representational emotional states prevalent in Butoh dance and the containment of energy found in SATM and Ozfrank Theatre Matrix's work. Elements of Roy Hart Theatre's preverbal experimental performance *AND* was also echoed in 5.

*AND* (1972), despite mixed responses from critics, was a successful performance of movement and sound. According to Noah Pikes, one of the founding members of the Roy Hart Theatre, *AND* was considered by many as being the definitive Roy Hart Theatre performance (Pikes 2000, p.121). The only evidence of *AND* exists as an audio recording, *Preverbal*, published by the Roy Hart Theatre Archives. The application of preverbal language of *AND* will be paralleled with 5 by examining the audio recording and published commentaries found in *Dark Voices: The Genesis of Roy Hart Theatre* (2000). *AND*, like 5, contained scenes in which the story was expressed though gesture and sound, and if there were words present 'they were sung, not spoken' (Pikes 2000, p.121). The first scene of *AND*, Explosion – Birds began with actors in a 'static compact position in the centre of the stage' (Preverbal 1972)

then in unison, all performers burst out in all different directions vocalising high pitched ‘peeps’. The conclusion saw the performers forming a Magic Chord, an interlocking pose that the performers found themselves in after slowly coming together. As they did, they vocalised in ‘an ever increasing crescendo until it [could not] be held any further’ (Preverbal 1972). This notion of collectiveness consciousness through sound and body was evident in 5, especially in the final scene Dance of Elements (5 2008) (40min. 49sec.), which was a collective physical and vocal exploration of the performers individual elements joining as one. A device for moving into position for another scene in *AND* was Wind, which saw performers moving into position using light, flowing movements and vocalising on breath. In 5, however, performers (in partial blackout) walked to their next position in neutral (similar to the Tenteketen, Suzuki’s Slow Walk) while lightly singing out a call and response using gibberish, vocables and paralanguage. In addition to the performative aspects of the performances, the aesthetic quality of the two productions were similar, the performers in *AND* and 5 wore ‘simple costumes and went with bare feet’ (Pikes 2000 p.121).

Although the work of Alfred Wolfsohn and Roy Hart were not directly influenced by Oriental physical and vocal practices, there were clearly some similarities. The contained energy, dynamic physical movements and vocal precision in the Amoeba exercise, for example, echoed some of the training present in the FSPK. The Magic Chord, another Roy Hart Theatre also echoed the collective, cathartic and ritualistic nature of Butoh in the way that it lends itself to the concepts of anonymity and extremities of human emotion. These qualities were also expressed in 5, even though they were not directly inspired by Wolfsohn’s or Roy Hart’s practice.

### **3.4 Eugenio Barba: extra-daily voice in crisis**

Eugenio Barba and the members of the Odin Teatret began to develop Vocal Action from 1969 to 1972. The members discovered that each one of them possessed a distinctive quality, and the group practiced this individuality through training and improvisation. Rather than developing a specific technique, common in some Occidental voice practices, the members of the Odin Teatret explored their own

resonators and paralinguistic skills with memorised texts, invented languages and vocables in a way to discover their own voice. Much of this logic was applied throughout the Training Sessions, particularly Stage 3, Paralanguage and Vocables.

The Voice Theatre Lab participants, from its early stages, were encouraged to develop their own distinct internal images; it was from these images that the performer expressed a non-habitual voice. Chris Jackson, throughout the rehearsal process of *Dr Faustus* (2007, 2008), developed his own individual abstract imagery inspired by Christopher Marlowe's text. From these abstract images, a 'dance' was developed from which vocal sounds were integrated. The quality of the sound was maintained when the text was applied. This was a clear indication of individual performer-driven vocal exploration. The notion of developing an individual language through paralanguage was further explored in 5, each performer, through improvisations and impulse work, developed their own language in accordance with their individual element they were portraying. This personal exploration was crucial for developing the performers individual voice, which was ideal in terms of developing the skills for eliminating personal habits and characteristics.

The uses of external and internal stimuli were key elements in Odin's physical and vocal training. As actions were prompted by imaginary stimuli, the actors developed exercises that allowed external imagery to influence vocal expression. In the film *Vocal Training at the Odin Teatret* (1972), Eugenio Barba and Iben Nagel Rasmussen performed an exercise that demonstrated this concept. Barba asked Rasmussen to hold out his hand with her voice and let speech emerge from that part of her body nearest to his hand. Barba then slowly moved his hand around the space and Rasmussen followed as she attempted to 'place' the voice to the hand. The voice was treated as an external entity, just like any other part of the body. The notion of vocal placement to a specific image was explored further during Stage 4 of the Training Sessions. In the Voice Theatre Lab exercise The Invisible String (Appendix 1.2, pp.1-3) the leader guided their partner throughout the space initially using their finger, then various parts of the body. The partner first responded by releasing only on a controlled stream of breath, followed by sound, which was later shaped by consonants that then develop to an invented language. The overall idea is to imagine an invisible string between the

two participants. This exercise, demonstrated breath control and vocal dynamics, and the importance of the connection to the inner self, which in the context of Butoh dance was a representation of the dark aspect of the individual.

Barba's productions placed great physical and vocal demands on Odin's performers, much similar to the Voice Theatre Lab's. This is evident in Odin's rigorous physical choreography, which borders on dance. In the film *Ascent to the Sea* (1982) (a filmed version of their street theatre production *Anabasis*), performers interacted with each other and the audience using invented languages and circus-like performance. 5, like *Anabasis*, had no script and no unifying theme. What solidified these productions were episodic dramaturgies that created structures, which formed a sequence. Ian Watson described in *Towards a Third Theatre* (1993), that Odin's productions contained:

‘an equally complex vocal score – often consisting of several languages or even fabricated tongues, delivered in a style that might best be described as a combination of singing, declamation, and incantation’ (Watson 1993, p.104).

Voice Theatre Lab's production of *Dr Faustus* contained that very combination of singing, declamation and invented language to create a non-conventional performance. In scene 4, Faustus read his deeds while walking in a grid-like pattern resembling the shape of a pyramid while speaking in a declamatory style. Although he spoke in a monotonous tone, without any emotional context, he raised pitch as he progressed to the top of the pyramid (Appendix 10.1, p.65). In contrast Faustus' speech, Lucifer (Jessica Brownrigg) sung all her dialogue, as the stage directions suggested: ‘not necessarily in tune or to a specific melody [and] [e]xploring highs and lows, sweeping through range, improvising [the melody]’ (Appendix 10.2, pp.65-66). When all other performers expressed the image of extreme heat through voice and body, Lucifer softly improvised a melody: ‘Christ cannot save thy soul, [*whispers* for he is just:] there's none but I have interest in the same’ (Appendix 10.2, pp.65-66). In further contrast to both declamatory and sung dialogue, there were moments when Good and Evil Angels used invented languages and vocables to express emotion and

meaning. This was a complete contrast to the unemotional expression of any spoken word executed in *Dr Faustus*.

### **3.5 Bodies in crisis**

The four main influences directly borrowed from SATM (through the FSPK) were Sitting Statues, Standing Statues, the Slow Tenteketen all underpinned by internal energy. The demanding process and precision coupled with the contradictory free expressionistic exploration of voice and body inspired by Butoh allowed the performer to obtain a deeper level of focus in order to achieve this dichotomy of freedom with stillness. The SATM is also known for the rigorous ways of moving and walking.

Suzuki placed much emphasis on the way of moving, for example, the ‘Basic’ exercises which are ‘four short sequences that are often practiced towards the beginning of training...are the one of the first elements to be taught’ (Allain 2002, p.102). There are also ten specific ways of walking like Slow Tenteketen and the signature exercise Stamping Shakuhachi, which involves energetic stomping to music (Allain 2002, p.111). These walks were not a central focus in this investigation, however, the close contact with the feet on the ground and in some cases the sliding effect (a method of grounding and precision, a concept which Suzuki calls ‘the grammar of the feet’ (Suzuki 1986), is common in Oriental performance. Although the walks may seem passive for the spectator, it does require immense focus, energy and stamina: a paradox in action.

Both Sitting and Standing Statues may place a considerable amount of strain on the abdominal muscle groups. Standing Statues develop as the participant rises up from the floor in the middle of the Stamping Shakuhachi. Once the participant is upright, they move ‘repeatedly to “freestyle” frozen poses interspersed with low crouches’ (Allain 2002, p.112). The beat (or call from the instructor/director) which participants should adhere to can sometimes be fast, which means that participants need to respond on impulse, without any preconceived thought or position in mind. As participants ‘are held on tiptoes’ (Allain 2002, p.112), the core stability muscles are

fully engaged. A performer, who does not acquire the fundamental vocal skills or in fact any physical and vocal awareness, may experience some vocal discomfort that may potentially lead to vocal damage. If the performers voice is trained while their bodies are in a state of Crisis, the awareness increases and they are well equipped to undertake physio-vocally challenging work. Sitting Statues are just as demanding, if not more, considering the strain it places on the abdominal muscles. In *The Art of Stillness* (2002), Paul Allain explained the starting position:

move from a relaxed, seated tucked ball to balancing the buttocks, with the head and body facing forwards and the arms loosely circling the legs...pull the spine and head up to make the back straight and keep the centre revealed (Allain 2002, p.112).

The second position sees the performer still facing the front but with the legs straight out, raised a few centimetres off the ground with the feet flexed back. The third position is identical, however the legs are approximately shoulder width apart. This places a considerable amount of pressure on the abdominal muscles and therefore requires a great amount of focus, breath control and stamina. Participants always return to the first position (the relaxed ball) between poses.

The voice is applied and trained with the three Sitting Statues positions, as well as various 'freestyle' exercises. Voice is primary in terms of energy (Allain 2002, p.113) and according to Allain, 'there is no technical exploration of the voice as an organ of speech or the body as a site for resonators' (Allain 2002, p.113), unlike Barba or Grotowski. Suzuki draws the voice from positions of tension, a complete contrast to Occidental methods where voice is expressed through states of relaxation. Therefore, the overall vocal energy is a result of the physical application of functional tension.

An exercise that obtained a high level of functional and figurative tension was one developed during Stage 4 of the Training Sessions called Reaching (Appendix 1.3, pp.3-4) and was inspired by Butoh and the Standing and Sitting Statues. The participant (the protagonist) stood in a centre of a circle comprised of other participants. The person in the centre acquired a personal image; in the case of 5, the

participant embodied an element. Starting in a foetal position on the ground, the participant, with a beat of a drum or other percussion instrument, slowly rose, with arms reaching towards the sky in an attempt to reach their desired image. The participant was encouraged not to reach their image and drop back down on the ground just before contact was made. The drumbeat increased tempo as the participant rose and decreased when they fell to the ground. The other participants reacted vocally to the protagonist's physical and emotional energy. There were two objectives of this exercise. For the protagonist, the objective was to express emotionally the feeling of wanting something out of their reach, so the drama was created in the notion of never being able to reach their goal. For the performers forming the circle, their objective was to react vocally to the image using sound, vocables and invented language. The protagonist needed a high level of core stability in order to rise from the ground and keep the energy strong throughout: a quality essential in Suzuki's Statues exercises.

The SATM has been extended, contemporised and re-contextualised by Brisbane based Ozfrank Theatre Matrix. The Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow (FSPK), developed by Artistic Directors John Nobbs and Jacqui Carroll, employ the Suzuki Actor Training Method (SATM) as an effective and practical tool to develop the actor (Nobbs 2006, p.148). The FSPK inspired the Voice Theatre Lab to revisit the importance of the body in performance, particularly after Nobbs review of *Dr Faustus* and preliminary workshops conducted by Nobbs and Carroll for *Iam Nocte*. The other influence of the FSPK is in relation to the exercises, particularly post Stage 5 of the Training Sessions. Nobbs commented on early exercises stating they were not 'performative' (J Nobbs 2010, pers. comm., 30 January), which meant that they seemed as though they were aerobic exercises to benefit the individual rather than the performer. Steps were taken to discover what exercises would be most suitable to be performative.

Another predominant Australian company who engage in 'performative' training is Brisbane based Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre. Since 1992, Zen Zen Zo have produced performances as well as establishing themselves as the forefront physical theatre training centre in the country. Not unlike SITI Company, who has successfully

merged Oriental performance practice with the Oriental, Zen Zen Zo include Anne Bogart's Viewpoints with Suzuki in their training programs as well as a fairly rounded overview of Butoh. Although these three areas of performance practice may seem disconnected, they have an obvious through-line, that being strong Oriental influences and training discipline. The participant discovers links by engaging in the work, and in my experience, the links in which the performer experiences are spontaneity, imagination, the use, training and knowledge of the Centre, and the notion of play within a tight framework.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have examined the theatrical, theoretical and vocal practices of Alfred Wolfsohn, Roy Hart, Eugenio Barba, Tadashi Suzuki, and Ozfrank Theatre Matrix that relate directly to this investigation. Roy Hart's vocal explorations of the multi-faceted human being through the extended use of range are in itself an investigation and revelation of an inner voice in Crisis. These unconventional vocal methods go beyond the average convention of vocal use, which is akin to some of Butoh's rationales for extreme and grotesque physical gestures and movements. Eugenio Barba's implementation of paralanguage, non-textual vocables and invented languages is another form of Crisis that corresponded to the philosophies of Hart and Butoh: the expression of the subconscious. Although Suzuki's and Ozfrank Theatre Matrix's work is highly energetic and extremely focused, it can act as an anchor to the wayward vocal and linguistic applications mentioned in this chapter. It brings the performer back to the core, energising the body and therefore energising the entire human being during the state of performance.



## **CHAPTER 4**

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### **TRAINING STAGES 1 - 5: DISCOVERING, DEVELOPING AND REFINING THE THEME**

#### **4.1 Stage 1: Butoh and voice**

The exercises conducted with the Voice Theatre Lab participants from 2006 to 2009, directly linked with the physical, vocal and conceptual notions of Crisis. These exercises were the building blocks in developing the performance aesthetics, and the performances, being paramount and concurrent with the practical exercises, equally drew from the notion of Crisis. There were five stages in total between 2006 and 2009, each stage examining a specific topic.

Stage 1 (2006) was developing the conceptual notion of Crisis by defining four theme areas of Butoh: Dead Body/Voice, Inner World, Imagery and Space Between (Appendix 4, p.48) and Stage 2 (2007) explored that successful theme area. Stages 3 and 4 (2008) explored language, sound, vocables through energies and vocal actions and Stage 5 (2009) examined voice production from physical state of Crisis utilising successful elements from all five stages. The outcome of each stage resulted in a concise documentation of exercises and performances showcasing the elements researched.

##### **4.1.1 Methods: Defining the four theme areas of Butoh: Dead Body/Voice, Inner World, Imagery and Space Between**

Defining and categorising the core elements of Butoh was ambiguous and arbitrary as the style itself. There are no concrete definitions of it apart from various documentaries and more recently, books and academic writings on practitioners and the art form. Butoh is related to Dada as it is not a structured 'method' of performance, nor does it claim to be, as Butoh's objective was to revolt against structure, method and conformity. Toshiharu Kasai, a therapist and Butoh dancer who performs under the name of Itto Morita, stated that 'the ideas, philosophies,

performance styles...of Butoh differ very much among Butoh dancers, troupes, choreographers' (T Kasai 2007, email, 12 December). In order to locate the most pertinent means of identifying a solid theme area for the implementation of voice, four theme areas were chosen as a result of research into the varied field of Butoh: Dead Body/Voice, Inner World, Imagery and Space Between. These theme areas were not at all comprehensive or definitive; they were just selected out of the many themes and concepts that were found to be central to the Butoh aesthetic.

#### **4.1.2 Theme Area: Dead Body/Voice**

The philosophical background to the theme area Dead Body/Voice, stemmed from Tatsumi Hijikata, who trained for extensive periods before performing in order to empty the mind and body. In essence, the practice of exhausting the body through physical activity in order to discover its true sense is Grotowskian, as this method eradicates the obstacle: the habitual body. This concept allows the performer to 'cast off the body and the mind...[and] plays between emptiness and form, light and dark, beauty and ugliness in its cathartic transformation of the body' (Fraleigh 1999, p. 25) which correlates to the Oriental metaphysical origins of Zen philosophy. Hijikata also claimed that 'social conditioning contaminates the body' (Roquet 2004, p.33) in the sense that social and behavioural patterns inhibit the physical and mental self from embodying and expressing the image. This is also the case when dealing with the voice. The body, being an empty vessel through breaking down habits through literally exhausting it, allows the abstract image to penetrate and permeate, permitting it to take control and performing the 'essence of it' (S Tate 2007, pers. comm., 17 October).

#### **4.1.3 Theme Area: Inner Worlds**

Throughout Butoh practices, the concept of Inner Words is often mentioned. While examining various Butoh practitioners it was discovered that this theme was a *result* of any preliminary exercises or practice as opposed to being the *cause*. A performer would reveal their inner world after experiencing a specific state of being during or after training or even performance, therefore, '[t]he Butoh dancer endeavours to

reveal [their] relationship to his inner world, to the unconscious' (Masson-Sekine & Viala 1988, p.17). In a sense, all the themes investigated interweave with one another. The 'Inner World' can be revealed from a body suffering physical and mental exhaustion, but how we isolate this concept, and can we achieve this state without having to undergo a strenuous physical activity. After all, if the Inner World is revealed after Dead Body/Voice, it will only be a secondary effect rather than a primary state.

Two specific exercises were developed which encapsulated the theme of 'Inner worlds', and the inspiration came from the practice of Djalma Primordial Science. These were Body/Breath/Voice Continuum (Appendix 1.4, p.4) and Vocal Terrain/Vocal Landscape (Appendix 1.5, pp.4-5). Ephra, co-founder of Djalma, 'danced silently for many years with no connection to [her] voice' (Ephra 2006, email, 8 May) and began to realise that her emotional and image state became clearer when she was drawn to vocalise inside that dance, and her physical presence of her body deepened. Djalma have developed an approach called Inner Vocal Terrain, which defines the physiological construction of the larynx and pharynx. Instead of language, Ephra uses 'sound' in the form of paralinguistic or vocables, and suggested that 'we must forget the mechanism of speaking and singing' (Ephra 2006, email, 8 May). According to Ephra, the conscious shaping of sounds that form words and deny the mind's ability to control the pharynx and all its articulatory organs and its regular patterns needed for speech communication, needed to be overlooked.

Cracking Stones, an exercise that revolved around dynamic movement and impulse, was the inspiration for Body/Breath/Voice Continuum. This exercise involved 'instantaneous changes of the body posture along with vocalisation [which was] signalled by the cracking of stones' (Ephra 2006, email, 8 May). This allowed the performer to catapult from one physical state or 'emotional landscape' (Ephra 2006, email, 8 May) to another incorporating breath and voice. This practice of permitting the unconscious to determine the flow of air and sound allowed the performer to connect with their inner world, both physiologically, and esoterically. With the extension of Cracking Stones, the performer was challenged by disregarding the conscious mind and allowing the unconscious to react to the sound of the stones

hitting one another. The two exercises were amended, with more emphasis being placed on the vocal production and sonorous sensation.

#### **4.1.4 Theme Area: Imagery**

Imagery, the most solid and thoroughly documented theme out of the four investigated, played a large part in Occidental voice practices with Kristin Linklater being one of the most recognised practitioners utilising imagery in relation to voice. Some elements of Butoh are largely based around the continuum of internal and external abstract or concrete imagery. An internal image can be inspired from external sources such as a picture, painting, symbol or any object. The performer experiences an external object and experiences the essence of it by touching, smelling and moving around it. They subsequently form their own choreography based on the essence of that object in the immediate space. The transference from external to internal occurs when the performer personalises and interprets the essence of the image through body and voice: the external influence manifesting itself through the body, which is released through physical and vocal action. The most influential in terms of this component of the research is Hijikata's Butoh-Fu (or Butoh score) practice, which he used extensively in his choreography. This way, Hijikata used words 'to draw movement from his dancers, to unlock something from within' (Barbe 2002, p.9). The image, however, can be drawn from more than just visual sources.

Hijikata's imagery was drawn from a wide variety of sources, especially words. A student of Hijikata and Butoh dancer, Yukio Waguri claimed that 'Hijikata's attempt to "awaken and embody physical images through words" is considered a kind of 'method'' (Barbe 2002, p.10). During his direction, Hijikata would stream off abstract words and the dancer would move these images, which culminated in a final performance piece. This demonstrates that images are multi layered in Butoh dance: from the Butoh-Fu, to the dancer physically transforming from one image to the other, and finally the audiences perception of these images. San Francisco's Flesh and Blood Mystery Theatre explained that the audience may not, or should not discern what this internal image is. Butoh is like a Rorschach test as the audience reads their own story in the actions (Flesh and Blood Mystery Theatre 2006).

These abstract words were implemented in the training. The exercise External Image Reactions 1 (Appendix 1.6, pp.5-6) was inspired by the work Hijikata undertook with Min Tanaka and Yoko Ashikawa. The instructor delivered a variety of words that did not make logical sense and they were not applied as pantomime or symbolism. The performers were not expected 'to provide form, but to provide the inspiration' (Butoh – Revolt of the Flesh in Japan and a Surrealist Way to Move 1991). On the other hand, External Image Reactions 2 (Appendix 1.7, p.6) was inspired by the work of Cheryl Heazlewood (Physical Theatre: Butoh and Beyond 1996) where various images were used as a starting point for physical and vocal improvisations.

#### **4.1.5 Theme Area: Space Between**

The notion of the Space Between is widely referenced in Butoh. According to Tadashi Endo, a Butoh dancer and long time collaborator with Kazuo Ohno, Ma means the space between things and 'is the moment just at the end of a movement and before the beginning of the next one' (Tadashi Endo 2006). According to Tamah Nakamura (2007), 'Ma in communication and in movement, is not an empty space but one filled with energy and meaning' (T Nakamura 2007, email, 5 April). Originally, Ma was a word used to describe a point between two objects, two sounds and 'as a result, more importance became attached to the emptiness or silence-the space between than to a thing or sound itself' (takaiimura.com 2006). In order to explore the Space Between, two sets of exercises were developed: Transformations and Contradictions.

Transformations play an important role in imagery as 'the skill [Butoh] values most highly is the ability of the dancer to transform' (Barbe 2002, p.3). They allow the performer to experience diverse images and indulge in the centre point – the midway point between one image to another. The performer would not only physicalise the centre-point between two objects, but the sound between the initial and final sounds of the image or word. This transformation between one image to the next allowed the performer to explore the Space Between both vocally and physically (Appendix 1.8, pp.6-7). Another way to locate the Space Between was by exploring contradictions.

In reference to Butoh, contradictions refer to the contradicting images that the dancer may perform sequentially. The contradictions therefore lie within the images themselves. A method of training was developed where the performer consciously split the body and the voice in order to obtain an immediate, internal sense of contradiction (Appendix 1.9, p.7). The mask of the face would express an emotion while the voice would express the complete opposite (e.g. mask expressing a happy emotion while the voice expresses a sad emotion). The practical aim of this exercise was to develop a deeper awareness of the body and voice, improve concentration and explore subtext, which could be found in the space between the two polar opposite emotions explored.

#### **4.1.6 Analysis of Session 1 Outcomes: Session A: July 16 (Dead Body/Voice, Inner Worlds), Session B: August 27 (Imagery, Space Between), Session C: November 26 (complete theme workshop)**

Participants were a carefully selected focus group consisting of performers, academics and teachers: Dr Tim Moss, Nicole Dobson, Nicole Jobson, Shannon Klekociuk, Chris Rattray, Rhys Martin and Luke Warn. These participants attended all sessions and were given a general questionnaire to complete after each workshop. Participants were asked to comment whether or not the work complemented conventional vocal practices, discuss changes in kinaesthetic awareness, discuss how the exercises in Dead Body/Voice and Inner Worlds affected vocal production, discuss changes in polarities in reference to Transitions, and comment on the connection between the emotional state and the subsequent vocal production. Several examples will be highlighted and explored.

Three out of seven participants agreed that this experimental work complemented previous physical and vocal work. It was therefore clear to see that the results showed that these techniques also expanded on conventional practices. It was perhaps the fact that elements present in the training such as relaxation, imagery and awareness are extremely common throughout most conventional voice practices. Although the majority of participants felt that the work complemented previous practices, most also discovered changes in their kinaesthetic awareness.

Five out of seven participants discovered changes in their kinesthetic awareness. The voice also complemented this finding, as the majority of participants felt changes in their vocal awareness. Moss stated that the Body/Breath/Voice continuum was the most beneficial exercise in terms of developing a kinaesthetic awareness as it ‘increased awareness of unconscious...movements and their effect on movement’ (Appendix 5.1, p.49) while Dobson became more aware of the action and reaction connected with voice and body and was focused on the ‘subtleties of movement’ (Appendix 5.2, p.50). Klekociuk, on the other hand felt a ‘heightened focus of pain [her] body felt from movement’ (Appendix 5.3, p.51). In terms of how the exercises in Dead Body/Voice and Inner Worlds affected vocal production, Moss stated that he experienced loss of vocal control, while it had no affect whatsoever for Rattray. The Squat and Bounce: Voice from Exhaustion exercise (Appendix 1.10, pp.7-8) was effective for Jobson. She generated a ‘raw quality to [her] voice – a greater sense of immediacy with text’ (Appendix 5.4, p.52) and that the voice became a way of endorsing or even facilitating the physical discomfort.

Four participants felt that there was a connection between the emotional state and the subsequent vocal production in Contradictions, while three disagreed. It was possible that those three participants were expressing the emotion at a superficial level, or that the Space Between exercises were not explained or practiced accurately, as there should have been a distinct split between body and voice (e.g. mask expressing a happy emotion while the voice expresses a sad emotion) therefore disassociating ones self from the core emotion and its feeling, leaving one to observe the emotion in an objective viewpoint. This practice should have evoked a representation of the emotion, as opposed to a truthful representation of it. Transitions, instead, did not favor as highly as Contradictions.

Transitions ranked low, as the majority of the participants did not discover any changes in polarities. One of the elements of Butoh is contradicting images, which aids to the surreal and atypical physical movements. Although the majority of participants did not possess any awareness of shifts in polarities, they did however

experience contradictions and dichotomies as a result of the entire workshop focus. Contradictions encountered the same issues as Transitions.

In summary, Butoh is a profound method for enhancing physical awareness, however it also complements previous conventional vocal and physical work. More emphasis needed to be placed on extending the physical and vocal range in order for the performer to transcend above the ordinary expressive physical and vocal state. Also, more explanation and emphasis needed to be placed when conducting Space Between exercises (Masks, Emotions) in order for the participants to fully experience the notion of physical and vocal transformations. This proved that alternative methods of training heightened physical and vocal awareness, as the work altered the conventional vocal and physical patterns and synergy. The alternating and diverse responses proved that subjects are diverse and that their responses differ and vary from one another.

#### **4.1.7 Results**

On November 26, 2006, the entire exercises were conducted consecutively, allowing the workshop participants to experience the four themes during one session. The investigation was to discover what theme area was most successful in eliminating habitual vocal and physical habits therefore allowing the participant to vocalise and perform from an 'inner place'. Overall, the theme Space Between was most successful, in terms of allowing performers to achieve an inner place, thus perhaps giving some insight for allowing training interiority, with Inner Worlds following (Appendix 6, pp.53-58). The least effective theme was Imagery. Both Moss and Dobson felt that Imagery was not effective in terms of locating the empty state and allowing the performer to express the inner place. Moss claimed that it required too much mental focus and Dobson felt that it seemed too much like an 'acting exercise'. On the other hand, Jobson felt the Dead Body/Voice was least successful as she felt that Tadashi Suzuki's Sitting Statues were more effective in achieving an effective Crisis state. Butoh is primarily a silent art form, but overall, the results proved that voice could be applied with Butoh inspired physical techniques, allowing the performer to express interiority.



#### **4.1.8 Discussion**

The successful theme area, Space Between, was further explored in Stage 2, 2007. Throughout Stage 1, it was discovered that there were no superfluous theme area or exercises, they were relevant, and held some degree of importance to individual participants. Instead of Space Between being a stand-alone title for a theme area, it would be developed into a philosophical base for which other elements can draw from.

It was discovered through research, personal communications with Butoh experts and practical applications, that in relation to this investigation, there were four main theme areas of Butoh dance: Dead Body/Voice, Inner World, Imagery and Space Between, and that one needed to be identified in order for it to be the main philosophical base of the training and performance method. Through discussions and data obtained from the participants questionnaires throughout Stage 1 of the Training Sessions, it was revealed that the Space Between was most successful theme in terms of eliminating social, habitual vocal and physical habits, allowing the participants to vocalise and perform in an 'empty state' and 'inner place' (Appendix 6, pp.53-58). This identification and connection with interiority and emptiness (synonymous with Butoh dance) primes the performer and prepares them for further work. It is also the philosophical base from which Conceptual, Vocal, and Physical Crisis developed. The following will outline the progression of the Training Sessions from discovering the most effective element from the theme area Space Between, identifying the energy source, then exploring vocables and paralanguage, and finally combining them while incorporating physical crisis.

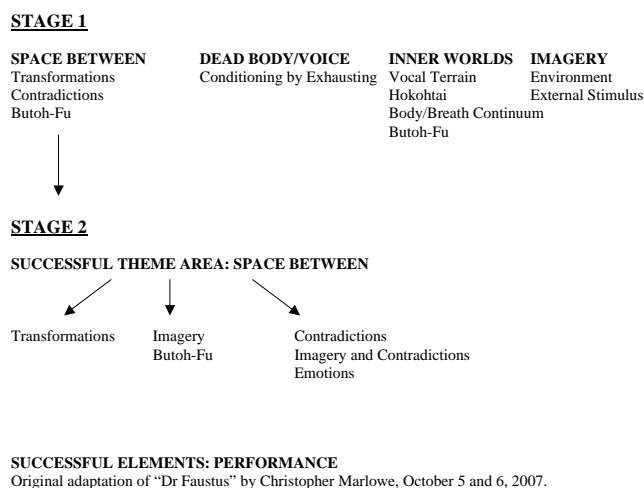
### **4.2 Stage 2: The Space Between**

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The following sections of this chapter will cover the practical and philosophical methods behind each element and how it related to the voice and body, and examine how that element worked with text. The Space Between theme was dissected into

three separate elements: Imagery, Transition and Contradictions, which were explored separately in Stage 1. Although previously included as impartial themes themselves, they were converted to individual elements within the overall theme. The reason for changing these themes into elements is because all three elements were a vessel for which the participant could locate the Space Between. The elements were conducted on separate workshops in the order of Transitions, Contradictions and Imagery. The entire sequence was then conducted twice throughout 2007 in order to obtain sufficient comparative data from the participants. An element would be chosen as a result of the outcome, and the process of that element was applied in the rehearsal process of an original adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, on October 5 and 6, 2007. Figure 1, below, is the development and progression of the themes and elements throughout Stage 1 and into Stage 2.

**Figure 1 Thematic map: the development of themes and elements in Stage 1 and 2**



Only selected exercises from Stage 1 were chosen for conciseness and relevance, and were refined for clarity. A variety of foundation exercises were implemented at the very beginning of each session. The entire cycle was repeated in the second block of training sessions. Furthermore, towards the end of each session, each participant presented a solo demonstration by which a particular element was implemented

(whichever was the main focus on that particular day) on a given piece of text. The choice of texts was not determined by the theme or elements, nor were they chosen to complement the participants, rather, they were randomly distributed to the members.

The choice of not giving participants the same texts was intentional for several reasons. First of all, a wide variety of texts were chosen as not to make the sessions and presentations monotonous, and to provide variety in terms of textual materials. By using different materials, the participants were not drawn to replicate other participant's choices. The texts were not chosen for their contexts or narrative; they were used as a device in order for the participants to generate certain images from the words themselves rather than allowing them to be bound by meaning.

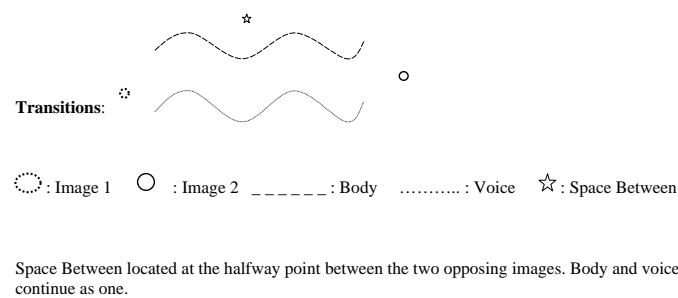
Two of Andrew Peek's unpublished poems were selected: *Heat*, which was given to Nicole Jobson, and *Birdbath*, which was given to Laura Bishop. Another poem, *The Fruiting*, by Ali Alizadeh was given to Jess Brownrigg. Two classic texts were used; Chris Jackson, who read the first few verses of *Gilgamesh*, and Andrew Peek, who was given Shakespeare's *Sonnet 129*. The participants chose which verse, lines, or paragraphs they wanted to use depending on the element focus. For example, if the workshop focus was Imagery, participants were able to choose a section of their text that had an abundance of images to draw from. We will now examine the methods undertaken for each element and how the notion of Space Between is evident within each element.

#### **4.2.2 Methods: Transitions**

Firstly, we will look at Transitions, and discuss what constitutes this element and how the theory relates to performance practice. As stated previously, Transitions was an entire theme in itself, but in fact, it can also exist as an intrinsic element within the whole Space Between theme. In Butoh dance, transitions, transformations and metamorphosis play an integral role in depicting the environment through the human form, which is in a constant state of flux. It is very common to see a Butoh dancer physically transform from one image to the next, and for some dancers, the half-way point between the two (often opposing) images, an area where the Ma is located. This

elusive point is neither here or there, it is a virtually untouched space; a surreal area that lies in between reality and the unconscious. By experimenting with body, voice and text, this resultant sound may reveal some subconscious constituent, and reveal something profound in terms of subtext of the given lines. Below is a visual diagram of the Transitions concept outlining how the body, voice and text correlate with this element.

**Figure 2 Visual interpretation of the Transitions theme**



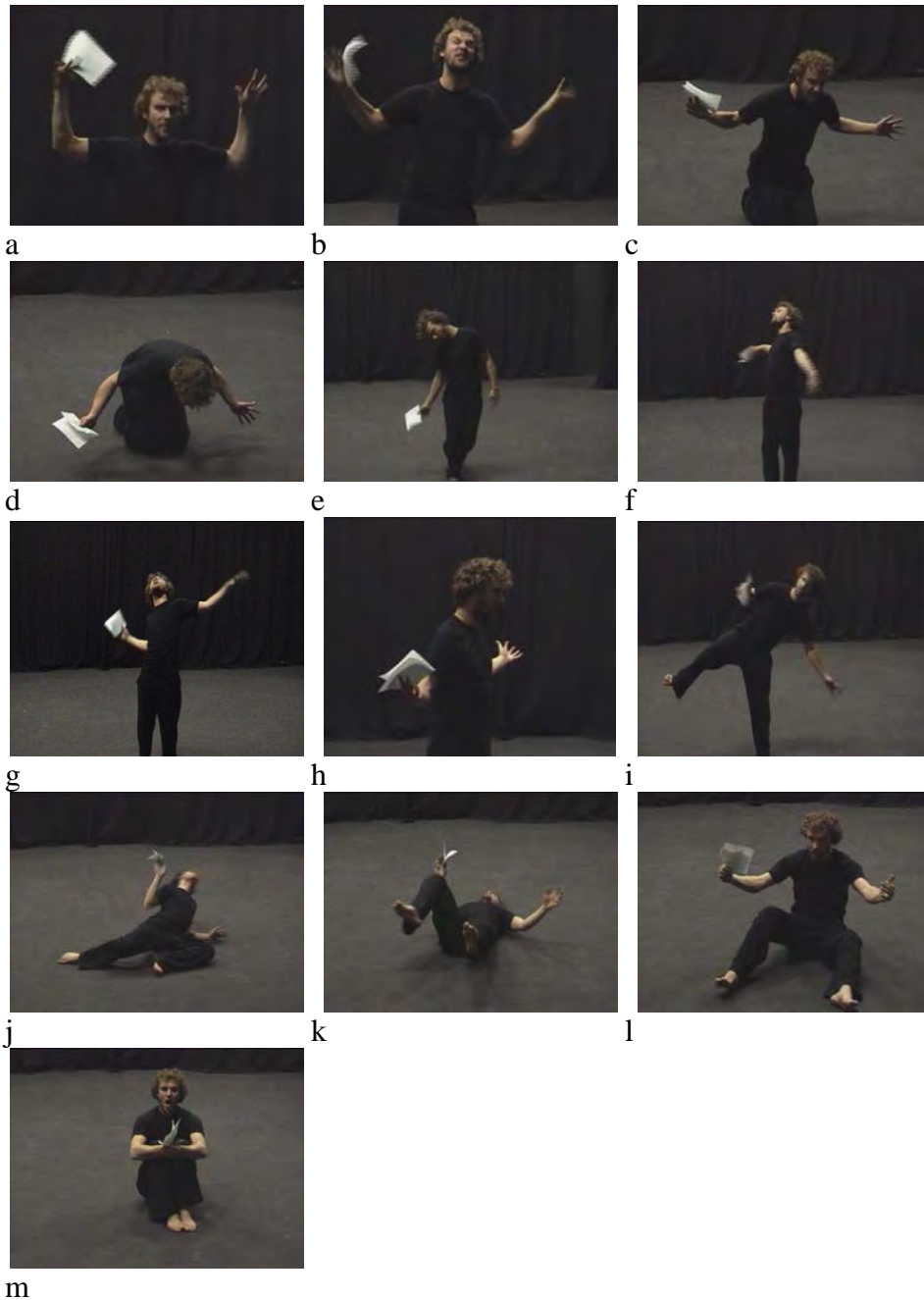
The physio-vocal actions were determined initially by the opening image (indicated in the above Figure as the dotted circle) and the voice and body, in unison, reach the final image (Image 2 indicated by the complete circle). Both body and voice continued on a journey exploring the minute details of the transformations from one image to the other while speaking the line of dialogue. All conventional textual interpretation was abandoned and intonation and operative words were ignored. The important details, however, were the opening and closing images located at the polar opposites of the chosen line or phrase, and the physio-vocal journey that the performer experiences. The centre-point balanced the two discrete images, (indicated by the star symbol in the above Figure). No transition was complete without the performer experiencing and momentarily immersing in the centre-point.

The text was not incorporated at that stage, as sound and body needed to connect. The voice was added by vocally expressing the physical sensations and dynamics experienced through the body as it moved from one image to the other. Literal

interpretations were discouraged and narrative was abandoned. The important factor was to experience the physio-vocal essence of shifting of one image to the other and all facets of the voice such as involuntary and uncontrolled gasps, creaks, clicks and aspirate sounds were encouraged. When all the transformations were experienced through the body and voice, the focus was directed to mid-way point. As the body, in this mid-way transitory state, moved through the space, exploring every facet possible of this specific centre-point, the voice too responded to the imagery contained within that state. Once the participant was comfortable with implementing voice with body, text was incorporated. The spoken word was to obtain the same qualities of the sound vocalised previously, therefore, no conventional means of speech was encouraged. Again, once the participants felt comfortable with the text, the mid-point was explored; this time with the focus being on whichever word fell into the mid-way point. When the textual implementation was practiced, the work was shared to the rest of the group and the results examined.

We will now look at one example focusing on the mid-point between the two images. Chris Jackson's text was the first section from Tablet 1 of *Gilgamesh*, translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs. Jackson only chose to work with the first verse, listed below, which was transcribed from his original working script (Appendix 7.1, p.59). These four lines contained a considerable amount of physical and vocal abstraction, which at times contributed to the unclear textual narrative. Figure 4, shown below, depicts Jackson's journey throughout thirteen frames. The midpoint of the entire piece is located in frame 4g, which was visually and aurally the most fascinating out of the entire piece.

**Plate 1 Chris Jackson: Chronological depiction of images**



Frame 4a, illustrating the image of Summer Rain, shows Jackson fragmenting the spoken word through fractured vocal sounds as he flicked his fingers, physically portraying falling rain. The fragmented sounds increase and physical tension became present in frame 4b, the images being ‘Breathy Chicks’. Through the lines ‘he saw the Secret’, Jackson stooped down while screeching the lines in both high and low pitched tones, through inward breath whilst embodying and voicing the image of looking back at the bottom of the ocean followed by the bubbling champagne that

‘popped’ and ‘fizzed’ at the final ‘bow’ at frame 4d. Jackson soon rose, and became a sloshing bucket of water on the lines ‘he brought information of (the time)’, again, delivering his lines in an inaudible and abstract manner through sloshing sounds, which intensified as he became the ‘Windswept tree on a desert sand dune’ (frame 4f) which finally climaxed in the midway point, frame 4g, on the image of blizzards covering footsteps. This moment depicted Jackson uncontrollably thrusting his arms outwards on each syllable, delivered with a breathy, raspy quality, on the lines ‘before the Flood’. The frantic actions dissipated on frame 4h (image of a ‘Glowing Key’) as arms were spread wide and pace protracted, exaggerating consonants, and speaking in a lower pitch. Jackson then balanced on one leg, kicking the other leg towards his side as he droned on ‘distant journey’ (frame 4i). On the lines, ‘pushing himself’, Jackson pounded his way to the ground merging into the ‘Viced Mouse’ image (frame 4j) which melded gentle voice with frantic kicking in the air. Frame 4l shows Jackson rolling his torso up, while keeping his legs flat to the ground, speaking ‘...to exhaustion’ smoothly on a high register. In this position, Jackson beat his hands together expressing the image of ‘Squashed Charcoal’ on the lines ‘...but then was...’ which ended in a moment of stillness (frame 4m) with an intense, whispered ‘...brought to peace.’

**Plate 2 Chris Jackson (L) and Dan Speed (R): A comparison of midway points**



Jackson and Dan Speed, a participant who also attended the workshop, used dense and image-laden classical texts, which allowed for rich images to develop. As the exercise was designed to encourage and explore individual interpretations, the examples reflected the diversity in dynamics and energy. Jackson’s midway point was physically vigorous and high in energy as opposed to Speed’s, which was vocally and physically paced and strenuous. Physically, Jackson completely abandoned any sense

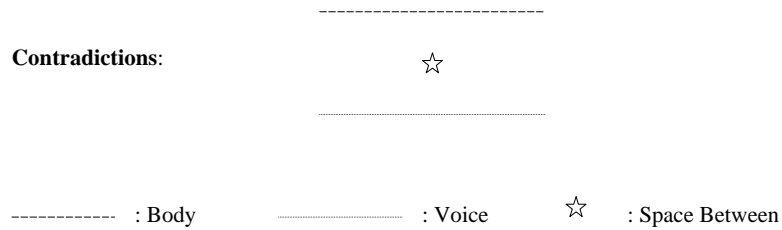
of containment, which resulted in frantic and uncontrolled movements, which resulted in incoherent and unclear vocal sounds. In contrast, Speed restrained his energy and focus inward, which resulted in a contained and internalised sound. Looking at these two examples, it was clear that each participant's interpretation was different. This was apparent as each participant was given contrasting texts and the responses to the images were therefore bound to be distinctive. The midway point would always be different when comparing two performers, however, what was evident in both was the commitment to the image, and the expression of the inner self, which allowed the body and voice to convey the extra-daily essence of voice and body.

### **4.2.3 Methods: Contradictions**

One exploration of the notion of physio-vocal contradiction was to consciously separate voice and body. Figure 2 below, is a visual representation of the body and voice being separated, and the resultant Space Between. An example of an exercise in contradictions is Contradicting Emotions (Appendix 1.9, p.7) where participants physicalised (including the entire mask of the face) a particular emotion and expressing a contradicting vocal sound at the command of the workshop leader. By stretching out the two polarities of the body expressing one emotion, and the voice expressing the opposite, the participant disconnects themselves from the two emotions, therefore exploring the essence and representation of it rather than the literal expression. The aim of the exercise, however, was not to challenge the actor to suppress certain emotions or to challenge their concentration in terms of keeping a certain mask while expressing the opposite vocal quality. It was an exercise to firstly allow the performer to experience what it was like to separate certain strong emotions or elements, and secondly to allow the performer to experience a contradictory state in order to encounter the Space Between two opposite emotions.

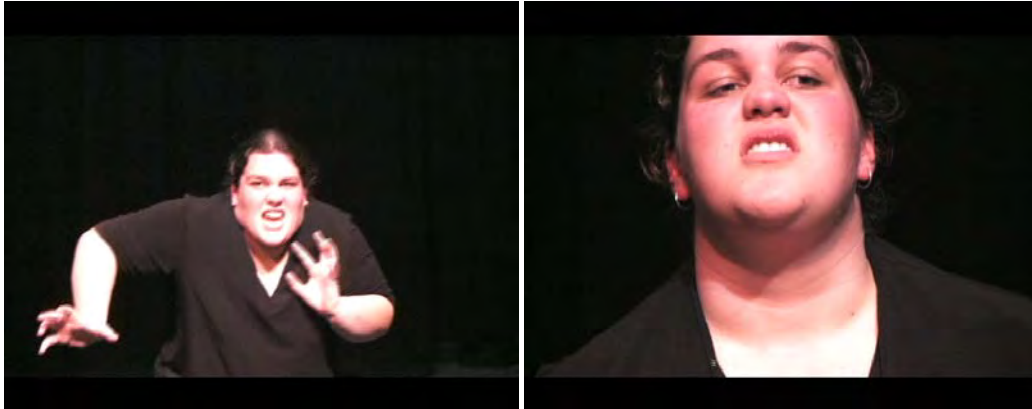


**Figure 3 Visual interpretation of the Contradictions theme**



Located between the two opposing images or emotions.

**Plate 3 Laura Bishop: Contradictions**



The emotion or feeling expressed vocally had an affect on the mask of the face, no matter how hard the performer worked in order to physically maintain the opposite emotion through the mask and body. The voices effect on the face is entirely expected as the resonators of the face in turn affect the sound of the voice. A continuum occurs where the face holds a particular mask and the voice expresses the opposing emotion, and both affect each other. The sound in fact may not be (and perhaps will never be) the true representation of that emotion as the resonators of the face and pharynx will naturally change the quality of the voice, thus placing the sound in a contradicting

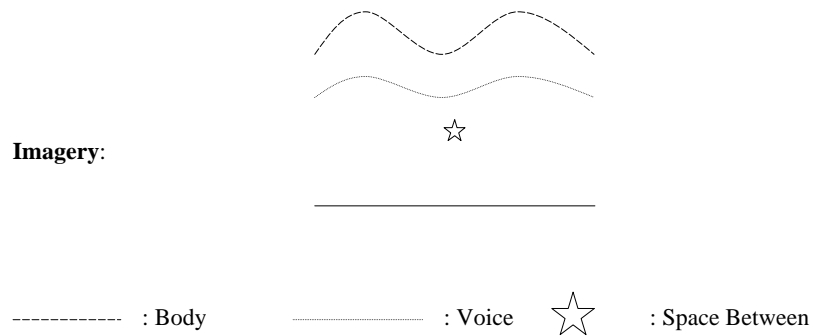
area. What is shown is the mask representing an emotion, the breath pattern, thought and internal expression of the opposite emotion through the voice, and the sound placement determined by the resonators that have been changed by the mask of the face.

Plate 3 (above) shows Laura Bishop performing the first line of Andrew Peek's *Birdbath*: 'Already the water, it holds' (Appendix 7.2, p.60), twice. In the picture on the left, Bishop is seen with a tense body, speaking with a calm voice. She wrote on her given text that the body was tense, dark, and cold, but her voice was light, high, calm, warm and comforting. On the right, Bishop reversed the order; her voice was tense, dark and cold while her body was light and calm. Although it is impossible to decipher the vocal quality in still pictures, it is unclear what the vocal quality is in the picture on the left. The calmness of the voice is masked by the intense physicality. To the contrary, it is clear that the facial expression on the right does not appear to be calm, light or comforting. The tense quality of the voice has clearly penetrated the facial mask. This proves several points: firstly, this exercise is a clear indication that the voice holds a lot more weight in terms of emotional context, and secondly, that it is extremely difficult in carrying the opposite mask to the voice.

#### **4.2.4 Methods: Imagery**

Figure 4 (below) is a visual diagram of the Imagery concept outlining how the body, voice and text correlated with this element. Again, all conventional textual interpretation was abandoned and intonation and operative words were ignored. The body and the voice proceed on a physio-vocal journey by expressing an abstract image, or a series of images determined by the structure of the text. The actual text itself (signified by the straight line), served as the logical element, and the physio-vocal expression of the abstract imagery (shown as the dotted and broken lines), served as the illogical. The centre-point occurred in the metaphorical middle of the physio-vocal expression and the text, indicated by the star symbol. The Space Between, or the middle point, was not consciously explored in this exercise like Transitions; rather, it was an abstract, theoretical notion; a concept rather than a tangible element.

**Figure 4 Visual interpretation of the Imagery theme**



Located between the 'logical' (text) and the 'illogical' (abstract imagery).

Performers found pivotal structures of the text and split each section, whether it was a verse or a line of dialogue, into voice and body. They were then asked to examine each section of text and to unconsciously create abstract images or words that have been inspired by the text. The images were not meant to be literal representations of the text; it was an unconscious reaction to it. The imagery, or the Butoh-Fu, was to be written and documented for each section. This abstract imagery was the focus point as opposed to the text itself, and was initially explored through movement.

Plate 4 (below) is a still image of Chris Jackson's performance demonstration during the lines: 'He went on a distant journey, pushing himself to exhaustion', with the Butoh-Fu of 'Glowing key, Leaf on a breeze rests on sea wave. Viced mice, Backlit yellow fumes'. Jackson retained the Butoh-Fu imagery developed for Transitions, but focused on the entire journey of the body and voice rather than the mid-way point.

**Plate 4 Chris Jackson: Imagery**



#### **4.2.5 Conclusion**

Statistical methodologies were used in order to successfully ascertain what the dominant element was, even though the study as a whole was anecdotal and qualitative. By looking at the total averages of the scores (Appendix 8, p.61) obtained by the performers questionnaires, it was clear that Imagery was the most dominant element. The leading combined element (body and voice) in a theme was Inner Place that was dominant in all three elements, Transitions, Contradictions and Imagery. Although statistical methodologies were employed in this study, it was important to have a concrete quantitative research outcome for this section. The statistical results confirmed what was anecdotally and subjectively affective in terms of performance outcome.

#### **4.3 Stage 3: Source of energy**

Now that Imagery was chosen, the focus for Stage 3 (the first half of the training sessions in 2008) centred on the source of energy, and whether or not the energy was more effective 'contained' or 'released'. Containment does not mean suppression, it means anchoring and controlling the energy in the body rather than the expulsion of it. Furthermore, the term 'contained' in this investigation referred to the stimulus and primary energy generating from the centre of the body (the esoteric term relating to the area of the body, generally located in the belly area where the impulse of emotion, thought and creativity lie), which has been placed under a certain amount of Crisis

through the body in various positions which activate the physical core in order to obtain a sensation of it. Containment also means a controlled balance of internalising the voice while concurrently imagining the voice leaving the body, creating a personalisation of the sound and a clear outward expression at the same time. This concept was initiated after experiencing several of Tadashi Suzuki's exercises conducted by Zen Zen Zo, primarily the Tenteketen and Sitting Statues, where a great deal of emphasis is placed not on the peripheries of the performers bodies such as arms, legs and face, but the physical centre. The notion of outward release, however, is important when using the voice, and Kristin Linklater's exercises from *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976) contains some fine examples of vocal release work.

Three of Linklater's exercises, which focused largely on 'allowing' and 'releasing', were conducted in conjunction with three original physically demanding exercises, which focused on contained energy. One exercise was primarily inspired by Suzuki's Sitting Statues, and was developed in conjunction with Pilates instructor Sara Redman and the other two exercises, inspired by Eugenio Barba's work. These two diverse approaches were conducted along side each other to allow the performer to examine the difference between the two, and to see which, in terms of expressing abstract imagery, was more effective.

### **4.3.1 Methods**

The first pair of exercises explored the Centre, the second pair examined the concept of anticipation, action and reaction in terms of vocal release and containment, and the third explored vocal control. The V-Pull (Appendix 2.1, pp.11-18), which was adapted from the Pilates Teaser exercise was conducted immediately prior to steps 1 to 5 of Linklater's The Centre exercises (Linklater 1976, pp.135 - 141).

It is necessary to state that the first edition of Kristin Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976) has been used even though a revised edition has been published in 2006. This early edition has been used, as it was personally available and accessible to participants. The recognition in Linklater's shift is acknowledged and it is understood that there are changes and advancements in the work since the first edition.

In both editions however, Linklater refers to the Centre. The term Centre, as Linklater stated:

means one thing to Martha Graham, another to Michael Chekhov and other things to others and me. It is a practical word, but only if one does not defy it to the point of searching for it as the Holy Grail containing Absolute Truth....working from it clears the mind and focuses energy (Linklater 1976 p.136).

This statement clarifies the fact that the Centre can be pinpointed to one specific place. It can also be transient, shifting from one place to another. The exercises in steps 1 to 5 looked at the links between inner energy and breath, which is, according to Linklater, 'forged in sensitivity' (Linklater 1976, p.135). Step 1 asked the participant to engage in a fast pant on the Centre with both opens and closed mouth, quivering and releasing in order to stimulate the Centre. Step 2 required the participant to find the inner Centre releasing on 'huh' and 'hey', and in the third and fourth sequence, asked the participant to shout 'hey' by consciously engaging the abdominal muscles, both Transverse and Rectus Abdominis, then to repeat the shout while activating the inner Centre without activating the outside abdominal muscles (i.e., activating the Transverse Abdominis rather than the Rectus Abdominis). The participant therefore would notice the difference between outer muscle strength and inner mental strength, the latter being far more affective. The fourth step required the participant to engage in creative visualisations using breath and various sounds leading to the final step, to connect words to the breathing/feeling process. These exercises were extremely affective in terms of sensitivity and locating the Centre, however, the question relating to the body's presence and role in this exploration of Centre and sensitivity was to be answered.

The V-Pull, which preceded Linklater's exercises, required the participant to engage their abdominal and stabiliser muscle groups as they lifted their body into a 'V' position with legs off the ground at about 45 degrees, spine straight with arms out front, as indicated in Plate 5. While the participant was in this position, they engaged in all of the Linklater exercises from steps 1 to 5. The added intensity of the physical

pose created a heightened sense of energy, power and focus, generating an extra awareness of the inner muscles necessary for balance and breathing, which contrasted with the standing or lying which was to follow during Linklater's The Centre exercises.

Another aspect of containment of energy is the concept of opposition. *In A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (1991), Eugenio Barba stated that the 'opposition principle is the base on which [Oriental performers] construct and develop all their actions' (Barba 1991, p.176). Barba continued to say that some Oriental performance aesthetics would begin an action, for example, looking at a person to their right, by turning their head to the left, then suddenly turn their eyes to the person on the right. This is opposed to the conventional Occidental way of simply using a direct linear action of turning their head to the right (or the direction where the other person is) (Barba 1991, p.176). Vsevolod Meyerhold developed the refusal technique where by the performer explored the movement opposite to that which they wanted to make in order to accentuate the expression. This was signified by the anticipation/action/and reaction concept that was developed into the Boxing exercise (Appendix 1.1, p.1). Plate 5 demonstrates the exercise, with Jessica Brownrigg and Justin Groves exchanging sounds while in a static 'anticipation' gesture. Again, the physical is contained, but the voice is released.

**Plate 5 Anticipation, action and reaction: The Boxing Exercise**



The questionnaire asked the participants to rate the effectiveness of each exercise from 1 to 10, and the final results were averaged. The V-Pull exercise averaged an 8.5, while its counterpart, Linklater's The Centre received a 7. The next exercise,

Containment of Energy: Anticipation, Action and Reaction (the Boxing Exercise) scored an 8, compared to Releasing the Voice from the Body, which scored a 6. The final exercise, The Invisible String (Appendix 1.2, pp.1-3) was the most effective, scoring a 9.5, matching that score was Sensitivity and Power. Overall, when asked what was more affective, contained or released, participants scored contained an average of 26 while released scored 22.5. It was overall clear that the containment of energy was far more affective and successful in terms of this investigation in relation to expressing the internal image, and the most successful exercise in terms of consolidating the internal image and contained energy was The Invisible String.

#### **4.4 Stage 4: Containment of energy: Voice from internal image**

Before rehearsals began for 5, which was a performance showcasing exercises developed through Stage 3 of the training sessions, participants were taken through a series of short exercises exploring the expression of internal imagery through vowels, consonants and vocables. Again, participants were asked to score the effectiveness of these from 1 to 10. Expression of internal imagery through vowels scored an average of 7.83, consonants a 6.3 and vocables, 8.16. It was prevalent due to the data obtained from March 11 and 15, 2008, that vocables from internal imagery were most affective. The exercises from Stage 3 themselves, including the application of vocables and sound instead of language, were showcased in the production 5. Now that the vocal aspects and the driving force behind these vocal expressions was identified, the focus was drawn to the body. Further explorations were made connecting vocable training from an internal image in conjunction with the physical body in Crisis.

#### **4.5 Stage 5: The Centre**

Stage 5, the final stage of the training, was the focus throughout 2009. The ‘core’ and ‘Centre’ of the body was the primary focal point, taken from original exercises called *Voice and the Core*. These core-centric voice and core strength exercises were applied with external imagery, internal imagery, and the preverbal expression. The fourteen exercises formed the basis from which voice and imagination would develop. Out of



those fourteen, five seemed the most performative (i.e., positions which could seamlessly translate into performance, having some sort of performance context rather than a series of stand alone aerobic exercises). These were two lying exercises: Static Hold – Upright, and Static Hold – Facing Down, and three sitting positions: the V-Pull, Forward Roll and Roll Up (Appendix 2, pp.11-45). This training would form the blueprint, and physical vocabulary of the production and the exercises would seamlessly flow on to the rehearsals and performance.

The final two training sessions focused on the performative aspects of the exercises. Each performer was given an extract from an original adaptation of Seneca's *Oedipus*, from which they would work with throughout Stage 5. Participants were asked to include the exercises practiced on each of the training sessions on the given text. This process would allow the participants to develop a method of performability, which would link training methodologies into practice, therefore creating a seamless transition between training and performance. This process did not mean that the final performance, *I am Nocte*, would look like the demonstrations shown in Stage 5, it was an exploration to see how these exercises, with an underpinning notion of Physical Crisis, could be incorporated into performance.

#### **4.5.1 Methods**

Invisible String was the focus for the March 15, 2009 training session. The performer primarily focused on the external image (partners finger), but the personal response was generated from their internal image reaction to that external source. Participants then engaged in the Static Hold - Facing Up (Appendix 2.2, pp.18-25) and Facing Down (Appendix 2.3, pp.25-31), and the V-Pull. In order to connect the physical states of Crisis, participants applied these with the Invisible String, which created a heightened sense of energy, increasing the participant's concentration and stamina. The Kite (Appendix 1.11, p.8) and Sound Circle (External Imagery) (Appendix 1.12, p.8) was conducted along side Forward Roll (Appendix 2.4, pp.32-36), Roll Up (Appendix 2.5, pp.36-40), Roll Over (Appendix 2.6, pp.40-45) and Rolling Like a Ball (Appendix 2.7, p.45). Internal Imagery was explored beginning on May 17, where exercises like Reaching (Appendix 1.3, pp.3-4) was practiced, and June 14,

Emotional Transitions, an exercise adapted from the Emotional Line (Appendix 1.13, pp.9-10) was conducted. These formed the foundations from which the performers would base their performative demonstrations.

Performers needed to develop the notion of performability when demonstrating the exercises. They needed to include one or more of the *Voice and the Core* exercises in a continuum with vocal explorations using their text. Vocal Crisis was achieved by the hyper expression of the given text through sound, or deconstruction of text using phonemes. Conceptual Crisis was evident in terms of the overall notion of revolt against the convention; the concept of revealing the inner world; the idea of depicting the universal; the idea of 'killing off the body' in order to represent, as Hijikata said, the 'corpse standing upright'. This formed the foundation from which the voice, text, and various physical applications would be supplemented. To expand on the notion of performability, performers discussed movement and action in general as a follow on from the static nature of the Physical Crisis exercises.

Several new additions were explored during the latter part of Stage 5 for the benefit of extending these static crisis exercises from *Voice and the Core* to movement. These were lying, sitting, standing and walking: all aspects of physical presence. Static Holds – Upright and Facing Down were placed in the lying physical crisis states, The V-Pull and Roll Up were placed in the sitting categories, and neutral, horse riding and Sumo stances were placed in the standing category. Walking Physical Crisis state included the neutral walk, or a walk loosely based on the Tenteketen, the Bow – Back, which required the performer to walk forwards with knees bent, and arms up and above, reaching backwards, and the Bow – Front, which is the opposite, requiring the performer to curl their back, knees bent, with arms reaching forward. In order to create individuality and to allow the performers to have a sense of ownership of the work, they were asked to create their own versions of moving, sitting and standing.

Dan Speed was given the task of creating a new standing exercise, Andrew Peek explored walking and Chris Jackson developed a new sitting pose. Speed created the Crab Stance, which required participants to widen their stance and bring the heels inward, lowering their buttocks as close to the ground as possible. The participant

needed to stop the urge of falling backwards and place the elbows on the inside of the knees. Speed stated that the crisis that he imagined was that the participant was held to the ground by a heavy elastic, but there was an opposing force trying to lift the body up forcing a kind of balance crisis that affected the breath and subsequent voice. Peek developed a somewhat involved exercise laced with narrative, which required the performer to walk sideways, an invisible energy or force pulls the performer in and the subsequent sound is imagined to be generated from the ground. The knees bend as the torso is pulled to this invisible energy: 'a black hole' in the middle of the space that has an enormous magnetic power. Participants hit a barrier when they reached the centre and at that point they need to produce a sound that comes out of nowhere, that will 'galvanize' them. They tear free and slowly crouch down, turn around and walk away from the 'black hole' keeping their back straight, knees very bent and looking forward. There is a moment of blazing understanding with sound at the completion of the exercise. The pinnacle Crisis point was the final, slow collapse at the end, with sound. Jackson developed a sitting based exercise that was the reverse of the V-Pull. This required the participant to kneel on the floor, keeping the thighs and back straight, then gently leaning their torso back while keeping their arms out by their sides. They were not encouraged to lean back so the buttocks or back would touch their feet. Participants were free to gesture and express imagery throughout the space using only their arms. The Crisis was evident in the struggle to keep that position without falling backwards, while maintaining a free breathing passage and strong voice.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Training Stages 1 to 5 spanned three years with the underlying objective to locate the Space Between by means of experimental Occidental and Oriental physio-vocal applications. In that time, there was the implementation of voice with Butoh inspired exercises in order to successfully pinpoint the most successful Butoh theme (Space Between), and then to identify its elements, which were Transitions, Imagery and Contradictions. With Imagery being the most successful element, the next stage was to identify the most pertinent energy source. Contained energy proved most successful, which lead the investigation further to explore language and vocables

utilising this energy source. It was logical then to progress to the physical aspect of the training, focusing on Physical Crisis. By the end of Stage 5, a question was posed: What would it be like if the sensitivity and power (Linklater, 1976), and the rigorous, energising physical work (e.g. the FSPK and SATM) were combined? Could there be a training method where the subtle and the energetic work simultaneously? The answer is yes. The performer needs to train at a higher level, deconstructing all the facets of voice and speech whilst physically engaged in order to prime them for performance.

## CHAPTER 5

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### PRELIMINARY PRODUCTIONS

#### 5.1 White Dark: Imagery, Butoh-Fu and the voice

*White Dark*, a one-man production which was first produced as part of Island to Island, a program from the Ten Days on the Island festival (2007), was staged with the aim to investigate how Tatsumi Hijikata's Butoh-Fu method of abstract imagery correlated with voice and text. Hijikata widely used Butoh-Fu in his choreography that comprised of marks, visual images and poetry that was the foundation for the dancers actions. The dancer would only physically capture, explore and perform the essence of these abstract images that would 'strike the eye and mind of the audiences' (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p.52). The Butoh-Fu method has been proven to work in physical theatre and dance contexts, and *White Dark*, a text based work, was developed with the idea of abstract images being the main vehicle. Before examining the methods and techniques used in *White Dark*, and how the images were developed, we will now take a look at the history, themes and synopsis.

Discussions with Chris Jackson occurred in early 2006 regarding the possibility of working on the project. Jackson initially developed a short piece and the rest of the writing developed from that initial work. The final performance text, which became a collaborative process, eventually comprised of a series of separate short written works that focused on the theme of alienation, entrapment, ignorance and the human condition. These short works became stand-alone scenes, or units. The pieces were compiled and ordered to form a coherent structure, and some units were re-written to create continuity and stylistic consistency. The main aim of the initial conceptual and writing stages of *White Dark*, however, was to develop a text with a clear theme and synopsis from which the imagery could develop.

*White Dark* depicted the tale of an individual grappling with their own understanding of enlightenment, and the struggle dealing with multiple layers of contradicting thoughts ultimately leading to the debate of the concepts of good and evil. The

protagonist attempted to uncover the meaning of this by questioning the fact that evil is necessary for good to exist (and vice versa) while abruptly moving from one emotional state to the other. At the beginning of the play, the protagonist questioned the meaning of light and dark and assailed the audience with a barrage of questions that were asked before encountering a mysterious figure on a beach, later identified as Gaia, who wailed loudly as her red robes she wore blew in the hot wind. The figure, whose words circled 'like vultures' (Appendix 9.1, p.62), declaimed 'where is your life?! Can you feel anything' (Appendix 9.2, p.62). When the protagonist asked 'where is my life?' the figure replied 'it is here', indicating the present moment. The characters enlightenment began almost halfway through the piece when he finally understood 'what she was 'wailing' about on the jetty' (Appendix 9.3, pp.62-63).

The piece concluded with the protagonist answering the questions posed at the beginning of the piece. He explained 'One cannot understand the true meaning of happiness if one is in a constant state of depression' (Appendix 9.4, p.63) as he walked slowly and neutrally imagining a bowl of precious water on his head. The bowl, explained in the Butoh-Fu notes was 'taken off [the head] and brought out forward [to the audience, with]...all the experience [that the character had] in it' (Appendix 9.5, p.63). Throughout the piece, the protagonist moved through experiencing fear, despair, agony, ecstasy and enlightenment, allowing the audience, who are in close proximity to the performance area, to experience diverse emotional, physio-vocal states. These emotional states were anchored by strong symbols that acted as metaphors and allegories.

The two profound symbols in *White Dark* were darkness and light. These symbols were expressed literally through the text, for example 'Life is filled with ups and downs, light and darkness, until you go back to the nothingness from which you came...darkness' (Appendix 9.6, p.63) and through the voice and body, as in 'Black. I can't see! Hot sand! Blisters!' (Appendix 9.7, p.63) spoken with a full, grounded voice while physically low to the ground retreating backwards. This was opposed to 'Light. I can see! Lucia!!' (Appendix 9.7, p.63) which was spoken using a high voice as the body was pulled up from the ground. It explored stillness and dynamic

movement, the monotone voice to the extremely expressive voice, the inward breath to the outward breath. Darkness was also represented metaphorically.

Sondra Fraleigh and Tamah Nakamura explained that darkness is a term that had become synonymous with Butoh (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p.103). Natsu Nakajima, in an article called *Ankoku Butoh* stated that darkness associated with Butoh has ‘nothing to do with evil, but refers to the spirituality that is mythically associated with feminine principles of softness, earth, and surrender of ego’ (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p.104). It was this darkness that compelled Hijikata’s world. It was more of an expression of primal experience (Fraleigh & Nakamura 2006, p.47) rather than a depiction of evil. It was through the darkness that the character in *White Dark* found their light: their inner meaning. By exploring the dark side, the character discovered their primal instincts and in turn found their metaphoric light. The metaphoric and literal darkness therefore was essential in order for the light to reveal itself, both elements form one entity that work together to form the holistic essence of man.

The theme of *White Dark*, inspired by Plato’s cave allegory outlined in Jeremy Griffith’s *A Species in Denial* (2003), was the notion of being trapped in physical and metaphorical darkness and being ignorant of the figurative, ubiquitous light. Griffith (2003) quoted Socrates (1955) referencing the human condition: ‘Imagine an underground chamber, like a cave with an entrance open to the daylight and running a long way underground. In this chamber there are men who have been prisoners there’ (Plato trans. Lee, 1955, p.278). This statement reflected the speech beginning: ‘when someone is trapped in a dead mouth’ (Appendix 9.10, p.64).

In the cave allegory, Plato affirmed that humans see a ‘highly distorted representation of the world’ (Griffith 2003, p.96) because of living in deep denial. The next part of the cave allegory sees Plato explaining how humans could escape this world:

Breaking free, one of the individuals escapes from the cave into the light of day. With the aid of the sun, that person sees for the first time the real

world...Escape into the sun-filled setting outside the cave symbolises the transition to the real world (Griffith 2003, p.96).

The realisation, or the sun, is explained by Gaia using verse, as she tells a tale of a fictional person experiencing a similar situation several centuries ago (Appendix 9.8, p.63).

The protagonist in *White Dark* decisively chose to remain in the metaphoric cave even though the thought of happiness was within reach. The extreme emotional states corresponded with his dilemma that was expressed through the physio-vocal dynamics and now will now discuss these techniques and how they were transferred in to performance.

### **5.1.1 Methods**

Abstract images were drawn from the text, also considering mood, emotion and atmosphere. These images were written as self-contained pieces of text, becoming the Butoh-Fu. What resulted was a multi-layered performance articulating the unconscious through the spoken word using physio-vocal expression that was drawn from the Butoh-Fu. These layers were put into practice and developed, explored and refined over an eight-week rehearsal period.

The primary focus throughout the early stages of rehearsal was the cohesion of movements from one unit to the other and the linking of imagery, voice and body, with text unconventionally being the least priority. The image was read or spoken by the director and explored physically, through a dance. The starting point for voice was exercising the vocal range and exploring all facets of the vocal terrain, including sound created by the inward breath, an element which is highly ignored in everyday speech. The voice was not intended to sound forced, contrived, or manipulated by the intellect; rather it was a reflection of the inner sense of the Butoh-Fu. The body's dynamics, tempo, rhythm and energy were connected to the voice. The dialogue was the third and final layer that was added, but conventional speech delivery was ignored as the words maintained the expression of the sound. The result was an abstract,



multi-faceted performance incorporating alternative forms of text interpretation (relying on the unconscious for subtext), physical theatre, and unconventional use of the voice by shaping the sounds inspired by the body and imagery rather than standard text delivery. By examining the filmed performance of *White Dark* (Voice and the Core/White Dark 2007) (Appendix 14, p.82) we can see how imagery, body and voice merge using this process.

One of the main characteristics of the first unit was the implementation of speaking on the inward breath while physically engaged to the imagery. The performance begins with a slowly pulsing spotlight revealing the performer (Robert Lewis), crouched on the ground, slowly rising whilst vocalising 'Shhh' (Appendix 14, 4 min. 18 sec.). This corresponded with the Butoh-Fu: 'Awaken from the space' (Appendix 9.9, p.137). As the body rose, arms lifted, cupping the hands (Appendix 14, 4 min. 40 sec.) and the lines 'Let these be light!' (Appendix 9.9, p.137) were whispered. The whispering reflected the Butoh-Fu of gas venting from cracks of the surface caused by a daffodil growing, the 'stem (growing) out of its mouth and the flower is the tongue' (Appendix 9.9, p.64). The body drew back to the ground (Appendix 14, 4 min. 50 sec.) as 'Let there be darkness' (Appendix 9.9, p.64) was whispered corresponding to the Butoh-Fu: 'Winter is making it go back into a bulb' (Appendix 9.9, p.64). This vocal and breath control and the balance between inward and outward breath through speech, depicted a level of interiority. During rehearsals, it was discovered that the inward breath actually internalised the meaning, sense and imagery. This was performed with an open throat, achieved by being aware of the openness of the pharynx and the slight flattening the back of the tongue, as it was difficult restricting the throat when inhaling and vocalising at the same time.

*White Dark* was a starting point for further Butoh-Fu exploration. The experiment was in its early stages, therefore the full commitment to the abstract imagery and the physio-vocal expression was at times, not present, resulting in some physical restraint and idiosyncratic gestures and mannerisms. The heightened sense of physical focus and proximity to audience was successful, as it challenged the notion of audience commitment and performance energy. This was largely due to the physio-vocal elements of the performance, challenging the audience to absorb the movements and

sounds rather than the narrative. Although these elements were overall successful, the body could have committed fully to responding to the vocal sounds. At times, the strenuous physical activity affected the voice and breath. The blurring of sound and text explored the fact that voiced sounds were equally as important in conveying a message to spoken word. Consequently, the blurring of sound and text was aurally interesting, but at times the narrative of the text became disoriented due to the inaudibility of some words, subsequently alienating the audience. Overall the technical aspect of voice production was fair, however, more awareness of physical and vocal control could have improved the performance.

Paul Silber, one of the founding members of the Roy Hart Theatre, reviewed the live recording of the performance and commented on the technical aspect of the voice, particularly the extended range. Although Silber found the work ‘inventive and certainly interesting culturally’ (P Silber 2007, pers. comm., 9 July), there were several issues which needed to be addressed. Firstly, it would have been simpler and easier if the text were abstract as opposed to the current conventional narrative structure. Silber could not see how the production was experimental because the performer is ‘obliged to tell the story’ (P Silber 2007, pers. comm., 9 July) if speaking text. Silber suggested to ‘use the consonants and vowels as a musical and rhythmic line and dance accordingly’ (P Silber 2007, pers. comm., 9 July), which would place less stress on the breath and voice. The other suggestion was to separate the narrator and the dancer, however this suggestion digresses from the whole notion of the performer obtaining a greater level of physio-vocal connection. On a technical level, Silber stated that it needed ‘body sound’ (P Silber 2007, pers. comm., 9 July), and that words like dark, black, shadow and even fear needed a deeper, richer quality to them. Perhaps the most influential comment was when Silber suggested playing:

a game with someone who knows [the] form of dance; where you separate the two arts and...then ‘sing’ the story as the text written and the dancer dances to [the] song; clearly there needs to be interplay between the singer and the dancer. You could then, if you wanted to put the two arts back together for yourself (if you have the breath and energy) (P Silber 2007, pers. comm., 9 July).

This tactic was implemented in 5, and subsequently used in the re-mount of *Dr Faustus*. Although the essence of the emotions and actions of the narrative was overall amplified by the abstract imagery inspired by Hijikata's Butoh-Fu, what it needed was balance and control, the embracement of stillness, physio-vocal discipline and dissection of voice, text and body before combining them.

There were some key questions raised throughout the process of *White Dark*. Did it matter that the words were not decipherable? Does narrative have to be expressed in the form of conventional speech, or can it fall in the space between literal reality and abstraction, a space where sound and text blur to encapsulate the Conceptual Crisis inspired by Butoh? John Nobbs noted in his personal response to the *Dr Faustus* film, that the 'astute appreciation of Butoh's precognitive aesthetic possibilities is an excellent starting point [for this exploration]' (J Nobbs 2008, pers. comm., 22 July). In the process of *White Dark*, any intellectualisation was abandoned and abstract imagery was embraced. The text was the least priority and interiority was the main focus. The separation and identification of sound, text and body was explored further on an adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's classic *Dr Faustus*.

## **5.2 Dr Faustus: Sound, text and imagery**

*Dr Faustus*, an abridged version of Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1604) was first performed in Launceston's Annexe Theatre by the Voice Theatre Lab on October 2007, and subsequently staged at the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney in May 2008. The themes of salvation, damnation, sin and power as corrupting influence are underpinned by Faustus' internal struggle between good and evil, which correlates well with the light and dark aspects of the human soul superbly explored in Butoh.

The overall aim of *Dr Faustus* was to create a production whereby the internal image generated by abstract imagery of the Butoh-Fu, became the guiding influence of the voice and body through means of spoken word and non-textual communication. The specific aim was to increase performers ability to connect voice, body and internal

image. The objective was to provide a method of training and performance that merged Oriental and Occidental performance practice and to provide non-conventional means of text interpretation and expression.

In order to identify the effectiveness of abstract imagery derived from the text, performers were given a guideline as to how they would approach the method. Firstly, preverbal vocal expression of the internal image during selected scenes, or especially for specific characters such as Good and Evil Angels (internal imagery), and reactions to physical actions on stage (external imagery), and secondly, the merging of sound and text which would later be classed as postverbal treatment. This element depicted the full physical and vocal expression of the images in the text by expressing the phonemes contained in the words, whilst also attempting to maintain some clarity. Faustus would primarily use this method to enhance his fragmented mental state. Thirdly, the use of conventional spoken word ('verbal' application) with full expression, extended range, clear articulation with exaggerated vocal expression were used in sections where the narrative is important such as Chorus. The cast had ownership of the play by being heavily involved in developing their own images.

Performers were encouraged to find their own images within the text, then move the image, vocalise the image, then speak the words maintaining the quality of the sound produced. Upon reviewing the work in rehearsals, if the sound was more affective than the spoken word, a suggestion was made to the actor to maintain that element without going further into speech. For instance the cast were to sound their image using preverbal expression and would not proceed to speaking the text. Nevertheless, the performers in Scene 5 (Seven Deadly Sins) asked if they could speak some lines instead of vocalising the essence of the image due to the importance of the words. The cast also commented on how laborious creating the Butoh-Fu was, as the creation of abstract imagery for each line was time consuming. In order to simplify the process, a suggestion was made to generalise the images in accordance with each character. As early as the second week of rehearsals, each character was given elements that would be the impetus for abstract imagery. These images were as diverse as 'Cold. High register, yearning up to the heavens' (Good Angel) (Appendix 10.3, pp.66-67), 'a body resurrecting from hell, picking up pieces of flesh from the body (affecting) the

voice. No sound, text only' (Mephistophilis) (Appendix 10.3, pp.66-67), and 'Image of ice, but when Faustus draws near, it changes to extreme heat' (Raymond) (Appendix 10.3, pp.66-67). At the completion of the first season, the production was evaluated.

The first performance of *Dr Faustus* was examined by separating it into three categories: text, sound and body, with each one focusing on successful and unsuccessful elements. An example of success in relation to text was the hyper-expression of the emotion and image behind the words, for example dialogues spoken by Faustus, Mephistophilis and the Angels. A suggestion for improvement was to observe the inner choreography of the text (observing each individual phonemes of the word and exploring those minute sounds in detail) and express the emotion of those specific sounds. The abstract and expressive delivery of spoken word was successful in relation to sound, for example Jackson's choice of using '[A dark, guttural voice] Et omnes Sancti!' (Dr Faustus 2008) (Appendix 15, 37min 18sec). Two suggestions for improvement were clarification in defining sounds and to choreograph and refine them once established. In order to do this, textual analysis needed to be implemented early on in the rehearsal stage. Successful physical attributes were the constant and seamless physicalisations creating stimulating visual imagery from all performers throughout the play. The performers bodies themselves created the stimulating visual aesthetic.

*Dr Faustus* contained no sets (apart from a small wooden block) and no specific costumes, the main focus: the body and voice. There were no entrances or exits; the performers were seen and therefore their energy for the entire length of the performance was high. Given that the performers were the main focus throughout the performance, John Nobbs upon reviewing the film of the performance stated that in order for performers to be 'transported to any kind of imaginative zone...[they must be aware of their] own daily habits; [their] non-conscious twitches and glitches' (J Nobbs 2008, pers. comm., 22 July). Nobbs used Chorus' introduction as an example, where he weakened the effect by idiosyncratic gestures and wondering around the stage (J Nobbs 2008, pers. comm., 22 July). These comments encouraged the Voice Theatre Lab to reflect upon the importance of physical work, and to embark on further

study of the FSPK, inspired by the SATM. This rigorous physical training that has roots in Oriental performance practice, was beneficial for eradicating personal habits and idiosyncrasies.

The proposed training method and performance style was not a representation of Oriental performance concepts and techniques. Doing this would see a mere generalisation, mimicry and perhaps mockery of styles steeped in tradition, and cultural and historical significance. Eugenio Barba 'rejected the idea of Occidental actors merely reproducing Oriental forms' (Watson 1995, p.133) and if Occidentals attempt to replicate these styles, it would result in 'poor imitations of the original' (Watson 1995, p.144). Barba continued to argue that forms such as No theatre or Kathakali involved a lifetime of study and practice, therefore it would attack the dignity of these forms of performance to reproduce them on a contemporary Occidental stage. Having stated that, this investigation contributes the notion of merging Occidental and Oriental not to create a cross-cultural hybrid performance style, but to unlock the psychological imaginative realm, and physio-vocal potential of the performer. The experience of Suzuki work, coupled with Butoh's concepts coupled with the further exploration of preverbal communication, was one of the main stimuli for the non-verbal performance, 5.

### **5.3 5: Sound, vocables, paralanguage and the image**

The search for a sound based performance to contrast *White Dark* text based narrative and *Dr Faustus* attempt to blur sound and spoken word, led to the development of 5. The one-hour production was essentially a performance showcasing training aesthetics developed through Voice Theatre Lab's Stage 3 and Stage 4 training sessions. Stage 3 training sessions aim was to identify the energy source, Stage 4 immediately followed with the focus being on vocal actions utilising the most affective source of energy found in the previous training session. The exercises were developed into 19 discrete scenes and what connected them together was the theme revolving around the number 5.

The number 5 is a sacred number in many cultures and represents the ‘phenomenal world in its entirety’ (Chevalier, J & Gheerbrant, A (eds) 1996, p.385). It is the symbol of the human being, the arms and legs outstretched form a cross to consist of five parts, containing five senses and having five openings in our face (two nostrils, mouth and two ears) as well as having 5 fingers on each hand and 5 toes on each foot. There are also five naked eye planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn). The Japanese names for the days of the week, Tuesday through Saturday, come from these elements via the identification of the elements with the five planets visible with the naked eye. At the conceptual stage of the production, the Voice Theatre Lab comprised of five performers.

The research into 5 as a sacred number led to the discovery of the cardinal directions north, south, east, west and centre, which progressed to the Wu Xing, the five elements and five cardinal directions in Chinese philosophy: wood, water, metal, earth and fire. These elements are reflected in Chinese medicine, horoscopes and even character descriptions of people. These five universal energy qualities were a springboard for further explorations, especially in connection with the voice, body and choreography. Individual elements were represented through movement, primitive vocal expressions and made-up language during the performers solo pieces. Generally, each emotion or element was situated in its respective areas on stage.

### **5.3.1 Methods**

Eugenio Barba’s notion of non-textual communication, vocables and Vocal Action (Vocal Training at Odin Teatret 1972) underpinned by the conceptual notion of Butoh dance, were key figures in developing Stage 4 Training Sessions and subsequently, the style of performance. An exercise to explore extreme emotion, informally called Gargoyles in a Line, was experienced in previous training with Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre (2007). This began with participants standing at one end of the performance space, and increasing their physical expression of a given image until they reach the other end, stretching the emotion beyond recognition in order to find the essence of it (S Tate 2007, pers. comm., 18 October). Applying voice developed this notion further by going beyond the conventional sound of an emotion, therefore expressing the

essence of it, like the physical counterpart (Appendix 16, 3min. 40 sec.). Another Butoh inspired exercise informally called Reaching (S Tate 2007, pers. comm., 17 October) was applied to develop physical expression of external imagery.

Traditionally exercised in silence, this notion was also extended by incorporating voice. Members of the group circled the performer in the centre and vocally reacted to the movement/dance performed by the actor reaching for an image that was out of their reach (Appendix 16, 19min. 02sec.). The scene Invisible String (Appendix 16, 25min 12sec) was inspired by the Vocal Actions exercise demonstrated by Barba (Vocal Training at Odin Teatret 1972). The concept was extended by incorporating physical expressions of internal imagery which was also determined by the external imagery their partners finger.

A scene to portray the relationship between external imagery, physical and vocal actions and energies was present in the scene called The Kite (Appendix 16, 12min. 9sec.), which was an extension on The Invisible String. This scene was included to depict, through voice and body, the connection between all the elements. It was obvious through the rehearsal and performance process that the practices of Hijikata and Barba link in terms of their use of internal and external imagery through physical actions, which was developed further which was therefore enhanced by the addition of voice. This resulted in a successful performance of sound and gesture.

In a review of the performance, actor, director and voice teacher Jeff Hockley, stated that the 'extraordinary use of voice [was] taken to a level not often heard on stage [and that there was] astonishing range of vocal techniques way beyond what is required for normal text-based work' (Voice Theatre Lab – 5 2010). In addition to this, Hockley noticed that there were some moments when the performers were 'holding back' (Voice Theatre Lab – 5 2010) and resided in their comfort zone. Hockley also stated that 'there were at times some really severe throat constrictions, and alarming glottals [and asked] if these were intentional' (J Hockley 2008, pers. comm., 30 April). Despite their effectiveness, these restrictions needed to be addressed. Hockley continued: 'with all the other bodily things going, on [were the vocal constrictions and glottals] a lack of attention to detail, or done in the moment, or are they deliberate?' (J Hockley 2008, pers. comm., 30 April). The vocal constrictions



Hockey observed were not prescribed or intentional. Tension present through the voice or body in the act of performance *may* be appropriate, but the performer must not maintain that through the rest of the performance or carry it with them off stage. If restrictions or constrictions were present (specifically in the case of anger or disgust), then they were purely spontaneous and an obvious vocal reaction to the emotion and image.

The major question asked was in relation to the actor's preparation and what exercises were implemented for performers to cope with such stresses. Overall, no performers lost their voice or encountered vocal fatigue. In fact, the performers voices became flexible in terms of pitch and range, and developed a richer tone. They were also physically free by the end of the process, especially Andrew Peek, who seemed quite tentative at the beginning of the Stage 2 Training Sessions and *Dr Faustus* rehearsal process.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

Like *White Dark* and *Dr Faustus*, *5* was a production that contained no sets, props or detailed costumes. It was not a scripted piece, nor a dance piece. The performers only wore colours relevant to their element that was portrayed. *5* was integral in this investigation as it proved that a form of narrative can be conveyed without spoken word or formal textual devices. The non-conventional use of voice, such as sound production from Physical Crisis and experimental vocal sounds, was a focus in terms of the main objective of the performance. *5* was, to an extent, self-exploratory and semi-improvisational. Each new production would be different, but the tight structure would remain the same.

## CHAPTER 6

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### MAJOR PRODUCTION: THE OEDIPUS PROJECT AND IAM NOCTE

#### 6.1 The Oedipus Project

If *White Dark* focused on how the body and voice was shaped by the abstract imagery of Butoh-Fu, then *Dr Faustus* was to expand that notion: to create a production whereby the internal image, generated by abstract imagery of the Butoh-Fu, became the guiding influence of the voice and body through means of spoken word and preverbal communication. 5 stripped away the spoken word and completely focused on imagery and vocables, paralanguage and preverbal sounds. The next performance would demonstrate the balance between abstract imagery in terms of the textual and preverbal, with the added element of Physical Crisis. The major production would constitute of a work in progress followed by a reworking and restaging the following year. In order to choose the right production, a re-visitation of the original themes prevalent in Butoh, being central to the ideas of Conceptual Crisis took place: the themes of light and dark. One of the cornerstones of Occidental drama that superbly captures the essence of light dark, sight and blindness and death and life is the story of Oedipus. Originally written in the 1st Century AD, Seneca's *Oedipus*, known to be more violent and graphically detailed than Sophocles' version was not intended to be performed; the play was to be recited.

The fact that it was a well-known story was one of the reasons it was chosen. The other reason was its themes of light and darkness, sight and blindness; appropriate elements in order to explore the antithesis; the highs, lows and dichotomies of the body and voice. The narrative was not an important factor, rather, the essence of the story, the imagery and the characters emotional journeys were to be highlighted. After all, there have been several productions of the Oedipus story that have been re-invented in recent years, like Barrie Kosky's direction of Seneca's version (2000), and Tadashi Suzuki's direction of Sophocles' (2000). The fact that it had been dealt with many times in classic and contemporary theatre was more of a reason to dissect and

re-arrange Seneca's visceral version to create a fresh and innovative experience which impinges on the core of human essence. The appealing factor of Seneca's *Oedipus* was also its negative trait. The text is raw and evocative, but also dense and lacks dramatic action. It has a clever balance between the poetic and humane essence of the Sophocles version, and the violent, bloody, and psychologically complex angle that Seneca masterfully conveyed. It is also more violent than Sophocles', and not enough lighter moments to create balance. One of the challenges as an adaptor and director was to find a dynamic equilibrium of these elements.

The need to have a solid story to work with was important. In order to find this base, four versions of Seneca's *Oedipus* was examined, E. F Watling's (1966), F. J. Miller's (1917) and a Latin version found online (L. Annaei Senecae Oedipus 2008). The Ted Hughes play of Seneca's *Oedipus* (1969) was also close at hand as a reminder to be dramatically relevant and concise. One thing that was appealing about referencing Hughes's *Oedipus* was his simple, yet affective use of dramatic language. The ritualistic quality of the play was due to its sparse text and action driven dialogue. The idea was not to replicate any of those translations, but to capture the essence of what Seneca was trying to say.

After completing several drafts, the text was submitted, along with Voice Theatre Lab's premise and a brief outline of the intentions for the production to dramaturge Peter Matheson. Matheson indicated that the script and the premise did not correlate as they had two different objectives, the script being very conventional and narrative driven which would take many months of rehearsal resulting in an extremely long production if the performance style was to be imposed on it. The premise, on the other hand, lied in the realm of abstraction and performance art. It was advised that the text needed to be abandoned. It was important to look at what Seneca was actually trying to say, according to Peter Matheson. Seneca just used the words to put the message across, but what was happening deep inside, what was underlying the text? What was underneath the intellectualisation? Was it necessary to look at what the author was trying to say, and explore that through physio-vocal means, rather than text based narrative?

The notion of turning *The Oedipus Project* and *Iam Nocte* into a piece of performance art or a preverbal piece like 5 was not exactly how it was imagined, however, the eight and final version of the work in progress script found a workable balance between abstract imagery, improvisation and spoken text. It also explored the past and present occurring together, experimenting with temporal shifts rather than focusing on the linear dramatic action that was used in the three English translations examined.

*The Oedipus Project* was a surreal exploration of Oedipus's mind. The purposefully fragmented timeline suggested that Oedipus was in the present moment, or in the not too distant future reflecting upon moments leading up to his self-exile. Oedipus's fantasy life was shown in the interplay between himself and Laius's spirit, who was brought back from the dead by Tiresias. An elaborate reconstruction of the past, especially when the dramatisation of Oedipus slaying his father at the crossroads, or solving the riddle of the Sphinx, was indeed agonizing for Oedipus. There were temporal shifts (two time frames in one scene, for example) and a blur between past and present. There were also no distinct changes in scenes (apart from the prologue at the very beginning), and seamless transitions were implemented to evoke a sense of fluidity and temporal fusion, an experience rather than a narrative exercise employed to take the audience on a spiritual and metaphysical journey. It also intensified the performers' state of physio-vocal Crisis, having to maintain various physical states during transitions from one image to the next. The rejection of the conventional notion of character allowed the performers to organically transform from one image to the next without having to focus on certain psychological attributes. The set was also kept to a minimum to enforce the performers' physio-vocal actions.

### **6.1.1 Methods**

Stage 5 of the Training Sessions was crucial in terms of exercising the methods and physical and vocal requirements for the work in progress: *The Oedipus Project*. The entire focus of Stage 5 was to use the core, and Centre, while exploring internal and external imagery. John Nobbs stated that actors should be able to speak in any position (J Nobbs 2010, pers. comm. 25 January). This statement reinforces the fact that actor training, particularly voice training should be rigorous enough to prime the

performer for any physio-vocal challenges. Even standing or walking should contain some form of crisis to increase performers concentration and stamina.

At no point were the performers standing in neutral or walking conventionally throughout *The Oedipus Project*. Attention was placed on their physical Centres at all times, and their core was challenged by intentionally pitting it off balance, for example, the new walks that were developed, Bow – Back and Bow – Front and Andrew Peeks Side Walk (Appendix 11, pp.68-74). In terms of standing, a Horse Riding Stance, Sumo Stance and Dan Speeds Crab Stance (Appendix 11, pp.68-74) were utilised. It was important to note that each of the stances and walks had a certain meaning attached to them. The performer generated the meaning in that time and space when the words, emotion and energy of that moment came instinctively from the Centre.

The performances on November 20 and 21, 2009 was evaluated, and the following are some major observations of the production. Prior to the prologue, a spotlight illuminated Oedipus's face, which was facing a large suspended mask. In that moment, which lasted several seconds, it would have been interesting to see the journey that Oedipus takes from birth to banishment, or from plague to banishment through his facial mask alone. Extensive phonetic imaging needed to be explored even further (i.e., connecting physical imagery to each phonetic sound uttered), especially when the Chorus spoke Latin, a language that symbolised the archaic, mystical word. Latin is a language which the performer can easily emphasise individual vowels and consonants. The postverbal treatment later explored in scene 7 from *Iam Nocte* developed this notion. The specifics regarding sound should have been adhered to, especially with the emotional context of the vowels and the logical context of the consonants. The physicalisations in terms of gesturing the image needed to be addressed, especially in the states of Crisis (particularly the Sequencing), so that it did not seem as though they were displaying a sequence of rigid exercises, rather a gestured expression of the internal image through these physical states with absolute purpose.

The sequencing performed on large 1m x 1m rostra needed more attention. The sharpness and timing may have not have worked as planned and it sometimes impinged on the impulse work (the performers conscious mind was thinking about staying on the blocks) therefore either a different method needed be used to experience physical crisis in those sections, or more practice. There were some interesting points that were worthy of further investigation, for example, the Invisible String, and the seamless flow of the Flocking used in the scene with the Madmen, and the guttural sound that represented an array of internal images prevalent in that scene. A complete review of the Tiresias scene was also needed. There was too much habitual moving overall which created visual noise.

### **6.1.2 Post-show reflection**

After witnessing the final work in progress performance (Appendix 12, pp.75-77), it was clear that the majority of the spoken word that was *consciously* spoken in a very manipulative way (e.g., extra-daily) could easily be jettisoned, or revisited in a different way. If spoken, it should come from the Centre without any conscious manipulation. A sense of physical and vocal presence was lost throughout most of the production, as there was an obvious blur between conscious manipulation of sounds and the organic reactions to specific imagery. An example of the progression is as follows: *physicalising* the imagery (from either internal or external sources), allowing the voice (*sound* alone) to connect with the body and adding *words*, but using the quality of the voice to dominate rather than meaning. This is where the progression stopped in *Dr Faustus* and *The Oedipus Project*. This further addition was considered for the re-mount, *Iam Nocte*: completely stretching or condensing the vowels and consonants of the particular word(s), in what could be called the new definition of *extra-daily spoken word*, or the hyperextension of text (later classified as postverbal). The result may be dialogue that cannot be *literally* comprehended, but *figuratively* understood.

This proposed amendment may not work for an entire line of text. A single figurative word in that line could be explored, it can be stretched out, condensed, repeated and even reversed. This way, audiences can accept it as abstract sound rather than an

infusion of noise that may be identified as words. This could in fact confuse the audience. The application of sound and text in the re-mount, *I am Nocte*, can be categorised in four sections: breath (inward, outward, gasps), sound (primordial, preverbal), extra-daily spoken word (the hyper extension of text and expression of individual sound within the spoken word, *postverbal*), conventional text (for narrative purposes), and foreign and invented languages.

### 6.1.3 Conclusion

After attending a ten-day intensive in the Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow (FSPK) directed by John Nobbs and Jacqui Carroll in Brisbane, it was clear what direction the final performance must go in terms of performance. Having experienced the practical work during the intensive, the notion of acting by consciously *not* acting, was beginning to be clearer. It was a matter of being, engaging the physical and metaphorical Centre and being conscious of the flow of energy throughout the entire body energising the muscles, flesh, bones, breath and voice. It was not really about being clever, consciously making choices for the sake of being interesting; it was knowledge of 'self' in any given moment; the conscious mind saying 'I am here' and the unconscious mind saying 'I am being'. In all this, there was a great deal of attention to the notion of feeling, and attention to the 'essence' of a character rather than its intellectual, action driven attributes.

John Nobbs, in a conversation after a training session mentioned something very poignant about this notion of character. He stated that in *The Chronicles of Macbeth*, whom Nobbs played Banquo in Suzuki's 1991 production, the actor playing Macbeth cannot 'become' Macbeth. After all, Macbeth did not exist; he was a fictional character. How can an actor pretend to become a fictional character that existed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century? There was no such person or thing. An obvious answer would be the actor portraying Macbeth needs to play the physical and psychological actions; these determine the character. Nobbs, in response to that concept, stated that what would be more powerful if the actor perform the *essence* of Macbeth rather than the *character*. In this Essentialist form of thinking, the performer would discover themselves throughout the process by simply speaking the lines of Macbeth while having this

‘essence’ of Macbeth brewing inside them: an unexplainable experiential force which is utterly true to oneself, rather than focusing on dramatic action. Nobbs claimed that we shall have an essence of Macbeth, Banquo, or Lady Macbeth, it’s through the discovery of oneself which makes the character develop. Furthermore, if one were to implement a false caricature to create some form of Macbeth or Oedipus, then the result would be a false representation rather than organic.

## 6.2 *Iam Nocte*

The revised production of *The Oedipus Project*, which was performed on December 9 - 11, 2010, was not a remounting of the work in progress with some minor changes; it was a complete reworking of the production. The final performance, *Iam Nocte* (being the first two words of Seneca’s *Oedipus* loosely translated as ‘now darkness is driven off’ (Mastronarde 1970, p.222)), focused less on the well-known narrative, and more on the emotional and core essence of Seneca’s interpretation of Oedipus’s character. Oedipus sensed that ‘he [was] to blame for the horrors of the plague’ (Mastronarde 1970, p.222) therefore his conscience is filled with guilt and fear. The opening Latin text, according to Donald J Mastronarde, ‘is a projection of Oedipus’ doubt over the cause of the plague and over his own god-ordained guilt’ (Mastronarde 1970, p.223). Exploring those human emotions: guilt, fear and doubt, rather than a prescriptive, narrative text, became the inspiration and constituted the main elements of the restaging.

One of the major changes was the minimisation of Creon, and the merging of Chorus with a new encompassing element, The Plague. It was in Creon where we originally saw a gradual rise and fall of power, offering a more a more rounded character with a clear journey and he also represented the real power of the human law, and the need for a stable and orderly society. With this major condensing of Creon’s character, more focus would be placed on The Plagues hold of Cadmus and Oedipus’ consciousness. The Plague, being physically present on stage throughout the entire performance, portrayed the fact that the pestilence and widespread affliction is prevalent amongst the people of Cadmus. The Chorus would now seamlessly merge into The Plague itself (Appendix 13.2, pp.78-79), shifting forms and fluidly moving



from Citizens to The Plague and various other elements in order to represent the fragile and unstable state of Cadmus and Oedipus' mind.

### 6.2.1 Methods

The revisiting of textual use and extension of image-based passages altered the entire shape of the performance text. The further exploration and implementation of the preverbal and postverbal applications meant that the majority of the English dialogue needed to be cut, and more Latin was to be introduced. Lengthy textually dense passages were also cut to give way to more exploratory physio-vocal praxis, and when passages were retained, performers were encouraged to develop preverbal or postverbal responses. To introduce more non-textual elements, *The Dance of Bacchus*, the Epilogue of *The Oedipus Project*, was reintroduced (Appendix 13.4, pp.80-81). Originally embedded in a monologue in Seneca's version, *The Dance of Bacchus* expressed the frenzied passion of freedom, a release of energy and exhilarating emotions. Instead of the story being told, it was expressed through physio-vocal action and positioned at the end of the performance, allowing the opportunity to explore a range of training methodologies and how they transfer into performance.

Previous methods were carried through from *The Oedipus Project*, notably the Sequencing, a form of Physical Crisis that portrayed individual physical reactions to a range of juxtaposing internal images, and Flocking (Appendix 13.2, pp.78-79), which portrayed group cohesion and a collective physio-vocal experience. The concept of The Kite was also further developed, expanded and explored (Appendix 13.1, p.78). Perhaps one of the most influential and current additions was the work influenced by the FSPK, in particular, a new exercise called Geology, based on their Teddy Bear exercise (Appendix 13.3, pp.79-80). The original FSPK exercise had participants place both hands on the upstage wall and at a certain cue (in Ozfrank Theatre Matrix's instance, after the first 16 counts of Slim Whitman's *Rose Marie*), transferred their attention to a teddy bear placed downstage and progressed towards the bear placing their focus and attention to their Centre, the audience and the bear. Geology, on the other hand, used performers bodies as both a starting and finishing point rather than a wall, creating a heightened level of physical connection. The exercise was

implemented in scenes where a collective consciousness was explored, such as Chorus/Plague (Appendix 13.3, pp.79-80).

### 6.3 Conclusion

The two main aesthetics that was solidified as a result of *Iam Nocte* was the production-focused attributes, which included the structures, textual choices and overall aesthetics, and secondly the performer-focused attributes. The conventional theatrical narrative structure was evident in *White Dark* and *Dr Faustus*, but ignored in 5, which contained self-contained vignettes, acting as their own ‘moments’. It seemed as though the textual narrative had a strong hold on *The Oedipus Project*, therefore hindering the physio-vocal potential of the performer, which impeded on the expression of preverbal sound. *Iam Nocte* was neither a narrative exploration of the Oedipus story, or a completely non-verbal production filled with vocal sound-scapes. It was a physio-vocal exploration that was abstract and visceral in terms of the unconscious exploration of voice and body via using Seneca’s *Oedipus* as a template.

*Iam Nocte* borrowed, and re-codified elements from *The Oedipus Project* and previous training methods, while incorporating new methods inspired by the FSPK. Several examples like The Invisible String was developed into Conversational Kites (Appendix 13.1, p.78) and the expression of internal imagery through voice and body in Scene 6 where Oedipus scanned the plague-ridden landscape. The carnage is expressed through his body and voice, while the Chorus/Plague Flock (Appendix 13.2, pp.78-79). New aspects were general specificity and concentration of the walks (a combination of Butoh’s neutral walk and Suzuki’s Tenteketen), and Geology (Appendix 13.3, pp.79-80). The Swipe, a new concept, was taken from the FSPK’s original Bacon exercise where the participants ‘swipe’ their face with their right hand, and the face morphs into whatever position the hand moves to, the face being like malleable clay or plasticine. The Swipe was extended to include the whole body with full vocal reactions, and instead of their own hands, other bodies swiping near them could also manipulate their physio-vocal instrument, signifying transformations not created by the individual, but created by external forces. A final reoccurring element in *Iam Nocte* was the action of trampling. The notion of trampling or ‘running over’

was put in place to show that in fact, nature, or powerful external forces beyond man's control, cannot be tamed. They in fact control the characters and there is nothing they can do to directly change or stop these natural forces. This is representative of Oedipus's inability to control his fate. *Iam Nocte* saw the codification and refinement of past and current practices, seamlessly integrating training (in which exercises were given performative context), rehearsal and performance.

## **CHAPTER 7**

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### **FURTHER WORK**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, some methods and practices researched as a part of this study, which are worthy of possible further investigations will be outlined. It is often the case with practical and theoretical investigations that more questions than answers are produced. Does this investigation suggest any interesting further avenues? Are there ways in which theatre workers could improve this research and practice? What are the practical implications of this work? Some of the topics covered in this chapter are other physio-vocal techniques that may be integrated, such as further investigations of voice with the FSPK, ‘a rigorous physical and vocal training system fully incorporating the Suzuki Actor Training Method within an expansive and deeply creative framework’ (Ozfrank Theatre Laboratory 2006). Styles of performance texts that could be further investigated will be discussed, and the close links with Bioenergetics, which calls for further study in the field of therapy, will be investigated.

#### **7.2 Other movement and voice techniques: The Frank Suzuki Performance Knowhow**

One of the dichotomies that is evident in the training and performance of this investigation is the amalgamation of Physical Crisis with vocal and physical freedom. John Nobbs, stated that the performer needs to ‘have strength, or power, with softness’ (Appendix 3, p.47), and that there is a distinct difference between tension and intensity. This was demonstrated in the walks and Stomping exercises seen in both the SATM and the FSPK.

Training in the FSPK makes the participant aware of the physical Centre at all times. With each step and stomp, the performer is aware of being ‘in the moment’, while also being aware of the energy transference from one leg to the other. Each step

should not be wasted, even through physical exhaustion, each moment of contact with the ground must be savoured because that is the driving force of creativity (and energy) which will manifest itself through the entire body, breath and voice. After all, what is felt on the inside shows on the outside.

There was a distinct difference of energy level and power between the physical presences of standing and moving that is demonstrated by conventional Occidental voice practitioners and the FSPK approach: one can be referred to as passive, and the other as active. The FSPK does not support physical tension in any way whatsoever, rather, it focuses on both an internal sense of mental and physical energy that is transferred to the audience. This encourages the performer to develop a heightened sense of physical, mental and vocal awareness that is directed outwards to achieve a performative level of experience rather than a private, internal experience (Rodenberg 1997, p.20). The FSPK encourages the performer to gently activate the lower back while keeping the spine tall while obeying the natural curvature, bending the knees slightly and at the same time being aware of where their Centre at all times. No tension should be evident throughout the body. The voice therefore should be 'pushing down into [the] pelvic girdle' (J Nobbs 2010, pers. comm., 30 January), which is what singers call 'the "down and out method" [which] would help to produce some powerful sounds, but would also work against the way the body naturally breathes' (J Melton 2010, pers. comm., 12 February). Naturally, people are meant to breathe the way nature would have intended. This is the 'in and up' (J Melton 2010, pers. comm., 12 February) manner by which the abdominal area releases and protrudes during the inhalation, and retracts during the exhalation, as opposed to the 'down and out' method of consciously protruding the belly both in inhalation and exhalation.

The simple fact is that the voice must come from the body, and this is what FSPK continuously reiterate. In terms of the FSPK, the voice must not be manipulated in any way whatsoever; this gets in the way of truth in performance. This may seem a contradiction, because if the performer is in a particular physical state, and when directed to release on sound produce a high pitch sound that may fluctuate in pitch, it may seem as manipulation. It is up to the leader or director to discern whether or not

the voice sounds as though it was manipulated. The performer themselves must feel if they have manipulated the sound, rather than the sound being truthful to their Centre. By manipulation, FSPK mean the performer having a preconceived notion of what the voice should sound like before getting into a particular physical position. This is premeditated and therefore a denial of natural impulse. What is truly interesting is for the actor to feel their Centre in that particular physical position, whether it is a standing or Sitting Statue, and release an open sound from that state. Of course, when asked to produce an 'oh' or an 'ee' sound, there needs to be some degree of pharyngeal construction, after all any movement needs to have some degree of conscious action. What is important though, is the resultant sound. The performer is producing an 'oo' or 'ee', that is the shape of the sound, but the sound of the voice should not be manipulated. The voice should not 'act', it should 'be'.

The vocal work generated from the FSPK, via the SATM is non-conventional and confronting. In voice training a lot of emphasis is placed on revealing the performers natural voice. Rodenburg and Linklater are on the same path as Suzuki, even though they are aesthetically and culturally diverse: the path of finding the inner truth by connecting the whole self of the performer to their voices. FSPK is not interested in conveying any colour in the words spoken during training. Jacqui Carroll mentioned by making the words and meaning sound beautiful, 'its just elocution, and its tedious, and it's ugly. It's not anything' (Appendix 3, p.47). What is truthful and more interesting is when the sound is generated from the deepest parts of the performers Centre. If the performer focuses on the sound alone, rather than the meaning of the words, the natural, organic meaning would come through. It is a physical reaction rather than an intellectual one.

A voice deep from the Centre, experienced in SATM or FSPK training is confronting because performers do not use their conventional, daily voice. They use an extra-daily voice, a sound that goes beyond conventional daily conversation and pierces through space from their unconscious. It can be a form of therapy – a performative therapy with out claiming it to be, as it taps into the unconscious through physical and vocal experience, and cleansing through Physical Crisis.

### 7.3 Conclusion

The work in this investigation calls for further exploration in experimenting and developing the vocal aspects of the FSPK, and the possibility of linking the physio-vocal techniques with therapy. The vocal production in FSPK is profoundly grounded, with the resultant sounds being very centred and resonant. Breath points are adhered to and meaning is abandoned, allowing the performer to find a physical connection to the meaning. What would be interesting, though, is to allow the performers to explore a wide range of vowels consonants to physically feel the sensation of sounds throughout the body while in various positions like Sitting or Standing Statues. But this notion goes against the very nature of what the work is about: going on impulse both physically and vocally.

Bioenergetics is similar to the FSPK as it focuses on active physical energy as positive action to alleviate tension. Although Suzuki is physically very demanding, it requires a lot of relaxation and focus on the Centre, and if the performer focuses on those two aspects, the body does not experience any tension. Like the FSPK, Lowen explored the voice and its full power. The voice, according to Lowen and Arthur Janov, reveals the unconscious, much like the vocal expressions of Suzuki, the FSPK or the Voice Theatre Lab, when the body is placed under a certain amount of Crisis. The unconscious (the inner world of the performer), and the conscious mind work as a continuum, and the performer needs to allow the unconscious to permeate through the voice and body for the performance to obtain an element of truth. The link between therapy (although not overtly obvious) and performance is evident, but too much concentration of the therapeutic aspects of performance may internalise and personalise the theatrical work, however, it surely is a topic for debate and further exploration.

## **CHAPTER 8**

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### **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This concluding chapter discusses the summary of worthy goals that have been achieved throughout the investigation in relation to the philosophical premise of the training, the training itself and the performance aesthetic. The contribution is restated in relation to the training, performance aesthetic and contributions to the local theatrical community. A way forward will also be discussed in terms of looking beyond the foundations of breath and voice work as well as discussing some contemporary practitioners who explore the connections between body and voice in somewhat unorthodox approaches.

#### **8.2 Summary of worthy goals**

##### **8.2.1 The philosophical premise of the training**

The period between 2006 and 2010 provided the Voice Theatre Lab participants opportunities to experience a range of physio-vocal training methods. These experiences which were both exploratory (for example when the performers were integral in the creation of specific exercises), and didactic (where exercises were given) allowed the performers to interrogate their relationship between their bodies, voices and their imaginations. As the training progressed, the overall theoretical and practical methods were refined, which assisted the combining of the underlying philosophy behind the exercises and their practical execution. In addition to this, performers discovered a sense of self through challenging practical work while also developing an overall sense of self-confidence. Most of all, they began to understand their physical and vocal landscape in relation to various performative contexts. For the past five years, the training progressed from just integrating Butoh and voice to produce a wide palate of practical exercises, to a refined and physically concentrated set of exercises which obtained the conceptual, physical and vocal notion of Crisis.



These exercises were initially developed individually, however, throughout the investigation, they were grouped into relevant sections.

### **8.2.2 The training**

By the end of Stage 5 training sessions, two volumes of exercises were collated. The first, *Voice and the Image*, comprised of Foundations, Energy, External Imagery, Internal Imagery, Emotions, Transformations and Contradictions. The second volume, a more aerobic set of detailed exercises titled *Voice and the Core*, was developed early in the investigation as an exploration of physical crisis and the voice. *Voice and the Image* proved to be a concise volume of exercises, and throughout the later stages of the training, and beyond, participants found freedom in exploring and combining various elements of the training to suit themselves, or the intention of the performance practice. *Voice and the Core* was proven to be a profound way of conditioning and priming the voice and body in an aerobic sense with no performative aspect to it. The work of FSPK called for a revisitation of the original *Voice and the Core* exercises and subsequent refinement which led to Sequencing (Appendix 11.3, pp.70-72) and Rising and Falling (Appendix 11.4, pp.72-74). These developments consolidated the practical elements of the *Voice and the Core* exercises with performative aspects together with various contexts in order to increase not only the performers physio-vocal potential, but their imaginations. Although the exercises were documented and collated in volumes, it was clear to note that exercises are malleable and always developing. One cannot put an end to the various combinations and possibilities of these exercises. On the contrary, it was more beneficial to condense and refine the work and to only pinpoint several core exercises that would form the basis of other explorations in training and rehearsal.

### **8.2.3 The performance aesthetic**

The productions from *White Dark* through to *Iam Nocte* saw significant developments in the methods of writing and adaptation, rehearsal techniques and performance aesthetic. The first two productions, *White Dark* and *Dr Faustus*, relied heavily on scripted texts and performers self-direction (e.g. sections in *Dr Faustus* where

performers developed their own internal images and rehearsed it themselves due to time constraints) while 5 explored more non-textual and workshop style rehearsal process. *Iam Nocte* found a balance between the heavily condensed Latin and English text, which formed part of the template of the production, and fluid, semi-improvised sections where performers were given training aesthetics to explore a particular scene or section. The script was radically cut down and adapted to focus on action, mood, dense imagery and core meanings rather than literal narrative. *Iam Nocte* was a performance that challenged the notion of conventional physio-vocal use by exploring non-textual communication, radically adapted texts underpinned by Conceptual, Vocal and Physical Crisis; elements which constitute the work of the Voice Theatre Lab. Through its productions, the Voice Theatre Lab clearly show that their productions are not bound by the semantic meaning of words. The freedom from not having connections to meaning enables performers to explore a range of concrete and abstract elements.

## **8.3 Contribution**

### **8.3.1 Contribution in training**

The Voice Theatre Lab engaged in unorthodox ways of connecting voice and body in its training. It examined alternate forms of physio-vocal training, looking into the illogical, contradictory and revolt in terms of the physical, vocal and textual. Over the past five years of training, the performers were engaged in physical positions that the body was not designed to be in (Crisis positions). From these positions, performers were required to vocalise, whether it was in response to various internal or external imagery, or a response to physical sensations. These were in place to train performers to ultimately speak and vocalise in any position. John Nobbs stated that ‘training at a certain level [is necessary], so when [the performer] come[s] back to a performance [they] – I don’t want to say [they’re] cruising – but [they’re] training at a much harder level than in performance’ (Appendix 3, p.46). The illogical aspects of the training, for example, Contradictions, where the performer executes a mask of a particular emotion, but vocalises the extreme opposite, was designed to eliminate the conscious and develop an unconscious response to the work. This overall illogicality, in

connection with abstract and sometimes challenging physical positions is an alternate method in achieving a state of heightened physio-vocal awareness, moving beyond quotidian forms of physio-vocal expression. As well as original methodologies, the connection and further extension of the work undertaken by Ozfrank Theatre Matrix allowed the Voice Theatre Lab to explore other means of physical work and adapt the vocal work of Tadashi Suzuki through the FSPK. This work was crucial in terms of developing the actors for specific performance aesthetic.

### **8.3.2 Contribution in performance aesthetic**

The seven Voice Theatre Lab productions from *White Dark* to *Iam Nocte* saw unorthodox approaches to not only the physio-vocal methodologies, but approaches in terms of the way a text was handled, developed and documented. Throughout the five years, Voice Theatre Lab have developed two types of productions, the first being a tight, structured, text-based performance (e.g. *Dr Faustus*, *Iam Nocte*), and the other being short, devised exploratory work with no initial extensive blueprint or text (5 (2008), *Tetractys* (2008)). Text based in this example does not mean the conventional script form, it means using a template of structured sequences that are based on a specific narrative, and are extensively rehearsed. The devised work follows a loose template where the performers and director develop a narrative based on the training aesthetics, in a sense, putting the training into practice. Other contributions in terms of performance aesthetic relates to the alternate means of preverbal, verbal and postverbal communication: the expression of the image through sound, the heightened use of spoken word, and the extraction of sounds within the word in conjunction with expressive physical movements. These productions create a unique, and challenging experience for the audience.

### **8.3.3 The local theatre community**

The intrinsic physio-vocal training methodologies and performance practice developed throughout the investigation was important in terms of performer development. The Voice Theatre Lab cohort's skill development increased greatly, and for some members, it was the first time they experienced this kind of alternative

training methodologies. Core company members have expanded their knowledge and developed their physio-vocal instruments as a result of being involved in the company. On both professional and personal levels, members have taken the training and performance experience and transferred them into other realms of performance. For example, Laura Bishop has found interest in sound art and has found various ways and means to transfer the training and practice to fit conventional theatre performance styles. On the other hand, Chris Jackson has explored the use of the various facets of the human instrument in experimental performances such as IHOS Opera's *Borders* (2010) and Mudlark Theatre and Jute Theatres collaboration *Dancing Back Home* (2010). Andrew Peek has found confidence with his own body and voice since becoming a core company member in 2007. The Voice Theatre Lab continues to develop the vocal and physical instrument of the human being and explore these notions through training and performance.

## **8.4 A way forward**

### **8.4.1 From the foundations to the exploratory**

No one can argue the basic physiological attributes of voice production. There is a natural, organic way to breath and release on voice. There are biological fundamentals about the vocal production, and of course there are also safe and unsafe practices, which could be potentially harmful. The act of breathing is an autonomous physiological activity and we rarely think about the act of breathing. Given that there are these physiological basics and fundamentals, there are countless methods of breathing techniques and the use of the voice, all with one aim: to achieve the maximum breath and vocal potential of the individual. Methods such as the Middendorf breathwork, in which the basis is 'being present and sensing the movement of breath in the body while allowing breath to come and go' (Body Voice Centre 2010) offers a:

distinctively different approach to how we understand and experience breath. It is a 'middle way' between the unconscious breath and deliberate conscious breathing exercises. It does not attempt to control the breath, but to highlight

the perceptible dimension of breath, which can be experienced in each breath cycle. It is a practice that encourages the growth of a bodily intelligence, one that cannot be grasped by the intellect alone (Body Voice Centre 2010).

On the other hand, Catherine Fitzmaurice developed the practice of Destructuring, which:

consists of a deep exploration into the autonomic nervous system functions: the spontaneous, organic impulses which every actor aspires to incorporate into the acting process. The tendency of the body to vibrate involuntarily as a healing response to a perceived stimulus in the autonomic "fight or flight" mode (as in shivering with cold or fear, trembling with grief, anger, fatigue, or excitement) is replicated by applying induced tremor initially through hyper-extension of the body's extremities only, thus leaving the torso muscles free to respond with a heightened breathing pattern (Fitzmaurice 1997, pp.248 - 249).

By looking at the two practices, we can see that the simple act of breathing can be far more complicated than what we think.

This investigation therefore did not aim to discover the most fundamental, most 'centred', most poignant, most practical way of finding the natural voice. This has been achieved significantly throughout the 20th Century by the teachings of Elsie Fogerty, Gwyneth Thurburn, J. Clifford Turner, Cicely Berry, Kristin Linklater, Michael McCallion, Patsy Rodenburg, Arthur Lessac, Catherine Fitzmaurice and many others, some of which have borrowed elements from the East. All of these voice practitioners, and more, maintain all the fundamental principles; they are not re-inventing voice work, they have just put their own interpretation on fundamental principles and what has already been tried and tested. There will be countless studies on the human voice as it is one of the most intriguing and interesting facets of the human body. We are so fascinated by this instrument, yet so frightened by it. Some voice methods have been controversial like Tadashi Suzuki's incorporation of voice, Alfred Wolfshon and Roy Hart. The performer needs to have knowledge of their personal limitations, engage in proper training in the fundamental basics, and the

willingness for the intellect and consciousness to move to one side in order to gain the full benefits of successful physio-vocal training.

#### **8.4.2 Other contemporaries and vocal experimentation**

There is no doubt that early voice practitioners worked with the body; after all, voice production is fundamentally, a physical act. We are now entering an age where voice practitioners are increasingly working on integrating body in their practice, and these practitioners are interrogating this relationship even more. Michael Lugering, founder of the Lugering Method and author of *The Expressive Actor* (2007), trains actor's body, voice, mind and spirit. Lugering's method focuses on the entire instrument and its expressive potential through strength, freedom, dexterity and flexibility. Joan Melton, author of *One Voice* (2003), is also a pioneer of voice and movement integration. Melton looks beyond the conventional forms of voice and body, and draws from a variety of influences like Catherine Fitzmaurice, Tadashi Suzuki and Pilates. Another contemporary voice and movement teacher is Barbra Adrian, author of *Actor Training the Laban Way* (2008) who seamlessly integrates the teachings of Rudolf Laban and voice. Experience Bryon, Artistic Director and Choreographer of Experience Vocal Dance Company, developed an experimental method called the Integrative Performance Practice which 'allows the performer the freedom to completely integrate unlimited movement and uncompromised belcanto singing' (Expressive Vocal Dance 2010). Electa Behrens, with her company D-Moor, also explores unorthodox approaches to voice and body, and John Howard and Helen Sharp of the Body Voice Centre in Fitzroy, Victoria work using Middendorf breathwork and are now venturing into performance practice. It is clear to see that there is a need and interest in this area of study, as practitioners from all around the globe are working towards the same goal: to achieve the maximum physio-vocal potential of the performer.

The Voice Theatre Lab are a significant, yet small part of the bigger picture who safely play, explore and experiment with physio-vocal elements. Performers should be free to experiment and express themselves physically and vocally without feeling self-conscious or feeling judged by others. There is no profound method to attain vocal

freedom, sensitivity or power and no single method is right for all performers as everyone is individual. The important factor of all exploratory and imagery-based work of the Voice Theatre Lab is that it focuses on the individual's creative expression. Although the training methodologies and practices outlined in this investigation seem esoteric, there is no outright encouragement to delve into a mystical realm, just the practicalities of combining the imagination, abstraction and creativity with the fundamental use and training of the voice and body.

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